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THE DRAMA OF THREE HUNDRED & SIXTY-FIVE DAYS

Portrait of H.R.H. The Prince of Wales
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THE DRAMA OF THREE HUNDRED & SIXTY-FIVE DAYS

SCENES IN THE GREAT WAR

BY HALL CAINE

WITH A PORTRAIT OF H.R.H.
THE PRINCE OF WALES

31285

DON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

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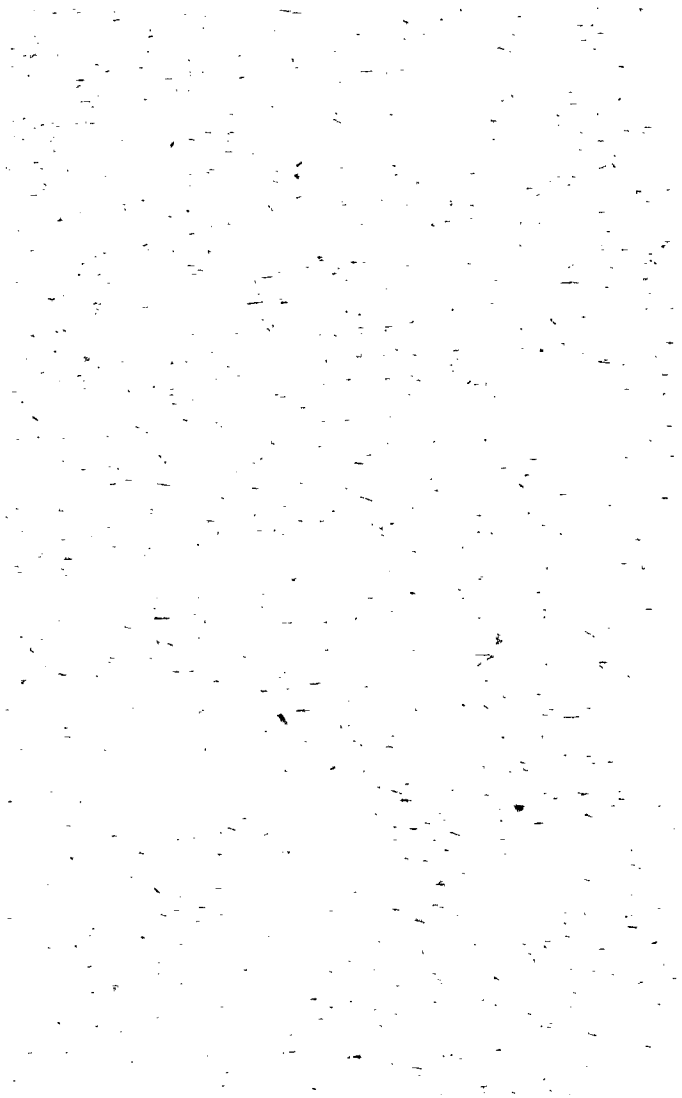
DEDICATED TO
THE YOUNG MANHOOD OF
THE BRITISH EMPIRE



CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE INVISIBLE CONFLICT	9
KING EDWARD'S LAST VISIT TO BERLIN	11
PEN-PORTRAIT OF THE KAISER	13
PEN-PORTRAIT OF THE CROWN PRINCE	16
SOME SALUTARY LESSONS	18
PEN-PORTRAIT OF THE ARCHDUKE FERDINAND	19
ONE OF THE OLDEST, FEEBLEST, AND LEAST CAPABLE OF MEN	22
"GOOD GOD, MAN, DO YOU MEAN TO SAY . . ."	23
A GERMAN HIGH PRIEST OF PEACE	24
"WE SHALL NEVER MASSACRE BELGIAN WOMEN"	26
THE OLD GERMAN ADAM	28
A CONVERSATION WITH LORD ROBERTS	30
"WE'LL FIGHT, AND FIGHT SOON"	32
"*HE* KNOWS, DOESN'T HE?"	33
WE BELIEVED IT	35
THE FALLING OF THE THUNDERBOLT	36
THE PART CHANCE PLAYED	38
"WHY ISN'T THE HOUSE CHEERING?"	41
THE NIGHT OF OUR ULTIMATUM	42
THE THUNDERSTROKE OF FATE	44
THE MORNING AFTER	46
"YOUR KING AND COUNTRY NEED YOU"	47
THE PART PLAYED BY THE BRITISH NAVY	49
THE PART PLAYED BY BELGIUM	51
WHAT KING ALBERT DID FOR KINGSHIP	53
"WHY SHOULDN'T THEY, SINCE THEY WERE ENGLISHMEN?"	56
"BUT LIBERTY MUST GO ON, AND . . . ENGLAND"	58

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE PART PLAYED BY FRANCE	60
THE SOUL OF FRANCE	62
THE MOTHERHOOD OF FRANCE	63
FIVE MONTHS AFTER	65
THE COMING OF WINTER	66
CHRISTMAS IN THE TRENCHES	69
THE COMING OF SPRING	72
NATURE GOES HER OWN WAY	73
THE SOUL OF THE MAN WHO SANK THE *LUSITANIA*	75
THE GERMAN TOWER OF BABEL	77
THE ALIEN PERIL	79
HYMNS OF HATE	81
THE PART PLAYED BY RUSSIA	83
THE SHADOW OF THE GREAT DEATH	84
THE RUSSIAN SOUL	86
THE RUSSIAN MOUJIK MOBILIZING	87
HOW THE RUSSIANS MAKE WAR	89
THE PART PLAYED BY POLAND	91
A PROVINCE WITHOUT A SOUL	93
THE SOUL OF POLAND	95
THE OLD SOLDIER OF LIBERTY	98
THE PART PLAYED BY ITALY	100
HOW THE WAR ENTERED ITALY	103
THE ITALIAN SOUL	104
THE PART PLAYED BY THE NEUTRAL NATIONS	107
THE PART PLAYED BY THE UNITED STATES	109
THE THUNDERCLAP THAT FELL ON ENGLAND	111
GREAT SCENES IN GREAT BRITAIN	112
A GLIMPSE OF THE KING'S SON	114
THE PART PLAYED BY WOMAN	116
THE WORD OF WOMAN	118
THE NEW SCARLET LETTER	121
AND . . . AFTER?	122
WAR'S SPIRITUAL COMPENSATIONS	124
LET US PRAY FOR VICTORY	125

THE DRAMA OF 365 DAYS

THE INVISIBLE CONFLICT

MR. MAETERLINCK has lately propounded the theory * that what we call the war is neither more nor less than the visible expression of a vast invisible conflict. The unseen forces of good and evil in the universe are using man as a means of contention. On the result of the struggle the destiny of humanity on this planet depends. Is the Angel to prevail? Or is the Beast to prolong his malignant existence? The issue hangs on Fate, which does not, however, deny the exercise of the will of man.

Mystical and even fantastic as the theory may seem to be, there is no resisting its appeal. A glance back over the events of the past year leaves us again and again without clue to cause and effect. It is impossible to account for so many things that have happened. We cannot always say, "We did this because of that," or "Our enemies did that because of the other."

* *The Daily Chronicle.*

Time and again we can find no reason why things happened as they have—so unaccountable and so contradictory have they seemed to be. The dark work wrought by Death during the past year has been done in the blackness of a night in which none can read. Hence some of us are forced to yield to Mr. Maeterlinck's theory, which is, I think, the theory of the ancients—the theory on which the Greeks built their plays—that invisible powers of good and evil, operating in regions that are above and beyond man's control, are working out his destiny in this monstrous drama of the war.

And what a drama it has been already! We had witnessed only 365 days of it down to August 4, 1915, corresponding at the utmost to perhaps three of its tragic acts, but what scenes, what emotions! Mr. Lowell used to say that to read Carlyle's book on the French Revolution was to see history as by flashes of lightning. It is only as by flashes of lightning that we can yet hope to see the world-drama of 1914–15. Figures, groups, incidents, episodes, without the connecting links of plot, and just as they have been thrown off by Time, the master-producer—what a spectacle they make, what a medley of motives, what a confused jumble of sincerities and hypocrisies, heroisms and brutalities, villainies and virtues!

KING EDWARD'S LAST VISIT TO BERLIN

As happens in every drama, a great deal of the tragic mischief had occurred before the curtain rose. Always before the passage of war over the world there comes the far-off murmur of its approaching wings. Each of us in this case had heard it, distinctly or indistinctly, according to the accidents of personal experience. I think I myself heard it for the first time clearly when in the closing year of King Edward's reign I came to know (it is unnecessary to say how) what our Sovereign's feeling had been about his last visit to Berlin. It can do no harm now to say that it had been a feeling of intense anxiety. The visit seemed necessary, even imperative, therefore the King would not shirk his duty. But for his country, as well as for himself, he had feared for his reception in Germany, and on his arrival in Berlin, and during his drive from the railway station with the Kaiser, he had watched and listened to the demonstrations in the streets with an emotion which very nearly amounted to dread.

The result had brought a certain relief. With the best of all possible intentions, the newspapers in both capitals had reported that King Edward's reception had been enthusiastic. It hadn't been that—at least, it hadn't seemed to be that to the persons chiefly concerned. But it had been just

cordial enough not to be chilling, just warm enough to carry things off, to drown that far-off murmur of war which was like the approach of a mighty wind. Then, during the next days, there had been the usual banqueting, with the customary toasting to the amity of the two great nations, whose interests were so closely united by bonds of peace! And then the return drive to the railway station, the clatter of horsemen in shining armour, the adieux, the throbbing of the engine, the starting of the train, and then . . . "Thank God, it's over!" If the invisible powers had really been struggling over the destiny of men, how the evil half of them must have shrieked with delight that day as the Kaiser rode back to Potsdam and our King returned to London!

PEN-PORTRAIT OF THE KAISER

Other whisperings there were of the storm that was so soon to burst on the world. In the ominous silence there were rumours of a certain change that was coming over the spirit of the Kaiser. For long years he had been credited with a sincere love of peace, and a ceaseless desire to restrain the forces about him that were making for war. Although constantly occupied with the making of a big army, and inspiring it with great ideals, he was thought to have as

little desire for actual warfare as his ancestor, Frederick William, had shown, while gathering up his giant guardsmen and refusing to allow them to fight. Particularly it was believed in Berlin (not altogether graciously) that his affection for, and even fear of, his grandmother, Queen Victoria, would compel him to exhaust all efforts to preserve peace in the event of trouble with Great Britain. But Victoria was dead, and King Edward might perhaps be smiled at—behind his back—and then a younger generation was knocking at the Kaiser's door in the person of his eldest son, who represented forces which he might not long be able to hold in check. How would he act now?

Thousands of persons in this country had countless opportunities before the war of forming an estimate of the Kaiser's character. I had only one, and it was not of the best. For years the English traveller abroad felt as if he were always following in the track of a grandiose personality who was playing on the scene of the world as on a stage, fond as an actor of dressing up in fine uniforms, of making pictures, scenes, and impressions, and leaving his visible mark behind him—as in the case of the huge gap in the thick walls of Jerusalem, torn down (it was said with his consent) to let his equipage pass through.

In Rome I saw a man who was a true son of his ancestors. Never had the laws of heredity

better justified themselves. Frederick William, Frederick the Great, William the First—the Hohenzollerns were all there. The glittering eyes, the withered arm, the features that gave signs of frightful periodical pain, the immense energy, the gigantic egotism, the ravenous vanity, the fanaticism amounting to frenzy, the dominating power, the dictatorial temper, the indifference to suffering (whether his own or other people's), the overbearing suppression of opposing opinions, the determination to control everybody's interest, everybody's work—I thought all this was written in the Kaiser's masterful face.

Then came stories. One of my friends in Rome was an American doctor who had been called to attend a lady of the Emperor's household. "Well, doctor, what's she suffering from?" said the Kaiser. The doctor told him. "Nothing of the kind—you're entirely wrong. She's suffering from so and so," said the Majesty of Germany, stamping up and down the room. At length the American doctor lost control. "Sir," he said, "in my country we have a saying that one bad practitioner is worth twenty good amateurs—you're the amateur." The doctor lived through it. Frederick William would have dragged him to the window and tried to fling him out of it. William II put his arm round the doctor's shoulder and said, "I didn't mean to hurt you, old fellow. Let us sit down and talk."

A soldier came with another story. After a sham fight conducted by the Kaiser the generals of the German army had been summoned to say what they thought of the Royal manœuvres. All had formed an unfavourable opinion, yet one after another, with some insincere compliment, had wriggled out of the difficulty of candid criticism. But at length came an officer, who said:

"Sir, if it had been real warfare to-day there wouldn't be enough wood in Germany to make coffins for the men who would be dead."

The general lived through it, too—at first in a certain disfavour, but afterwards in recovered honour.

Such was the Kaiser, who a year ago had to meet the mighty wind of War. He was in Norway for his usual summer holiday in July 1914 when affairs were reaching their crisis. Rumour has it that he was not satisfied with the measure of the information that was reaching him, therefore, he returned to Berlin, somewhat to the discomfiture of his ministers, intending, it is said, for various reasons (not necessarily humanitarian) to stop or at least postpone the war. If so, he arrived too late. He was told that matters had gone too far. They must go on now. "Very well, if they must, they must," he is reported to have said. And there is the familiar story that after he had signed his name on the first of August to the document that

plunged Europe into the conflict that has since shaken it to its foundations, he flung down his pen and cried, "You'll live to regret this, gentlemen."

PEN-PORTRAIT OF THE CROWN PRINCE

And then the Crown Prince. In August of last year nine out of every ten of us would have said that not the father, but the son, of the Royal family of Germany had been the chief provocative cause of the war. Subsequent events have lessened the weight of that opinion. But the young man's known popularity among an active section of the officers of the army; their subterranean schemes to set him off against his father; a vague suspicion of the Kaiser's jealousy of his eldest son—all these facts and shadows of facts give colour to the impression that not least among the forces which led the Emperor on that fateful first of August to declare war against Russia was the presence and the importunity of the Crown Prince. What kind of man was it, then, whom the invisible powers of evil were employing to precipitate this insensate struggle?

Hundreds of persons in England, France, Russia, and Italy must have met the Crown Prince of Germany at more or less close quarters, and formed their own estimates of his

character. The barbed-wire fence of protective ceremony which usually surrounds Royal personages, concealing their little human foibles, was periodically broken down in the case of the Heir-Apparent to the German Throne by his incursion every winter into a small cosmopolitan community which repaired to the snows of the Engadine for health or pleasure. In that stark environment I myself, in common with many others, saw the descendant of the Fredericks every day, for several weeks of several years, at a distance that called for no intellectual field-glasses. And now I venture to say, for whatever it may be worth, that the result was an entirely unfavourable impression.

I saw a young man without a particle of natural distinction, whether physical, moral, or mental. The figure, long rather than tall; the hatchet face, the selfish eyes, the meaningless mouth, the retreating forehead, the vanishing chin, the energy that expressed itself merely in restless movement, achieving little, and often aiming at nothing at all; the uncultivated intellect, the narrow views of life and the world; the morbid craving for change, for excitement of any sort; the indifference to other peoples' feelings, the shockingly bad manners, the assumption of a right to disregard and even to outrage the common conventions on which social intercourse depends—all this was, so far as my observation

enabled me to judge, only too plainly apparent in the person of the Crown Prince.

Outside the narrow group that gathered about him (a group hailing, ironically enough, from the land of a great Republic) I cannot remember to have heard in any winter one really warm word about him, one story of an act of kindness, or even generous condescension, such as it is easy for a royal personage to perform. On the contrary, I was constantly hearing tales of silly fooleries, of overbearing behaviour, of deliberate rudeness, such as irresistibly recalled, in spirit if not in form, the conduct of the common barrator in the guise of a king, who, if Macaulay's stories are to be credited, used to kick a lady in the open streets and tell her to go home and mind her brats.

SOME SALUTARY LESSONS

Only it was not Prussia we were living in, and it was not the year 1720, so the air tingled occasionally with other tales of little salutary lessons administered to our Royal upstart on his style of pursuing the pleasures considered suitable to a Prince. One day it was told of him that, having given a cup to be raced for on the Bob-run, he was wroth to find on the notice-board of entries the names of a team of highly respectable little Englishmen who are familiar on the racecourse; and, taking out his pencil-case,

he scored them off, saying, "My cup is for gentlemen, not jockeys," whereupon a young English soldier standing by had said: "We're not jockeys here, sir, and we're not princes; we are only sportsmen."

I cannot vouch for that story, but I can certainly say that, after a particularly flagrant and deliberate act of rudeness, imperilling the safety of several persons in the village street, the Crown Prince of Germany was told to his foolish face by an Englishman, who need not be named, that he was a fool, and a damned fool, and deserved to be kicked off the road.

And this is the mindless, but mischievous, person, the ridiculous buccaneer, born out of his century, who was permitted to interfere in the destinies of Europe; to help to determine the fate of tens of millions of men on the battlefields, and the welfare of hundreds of millions of women and children in their homes. What wild revel the invisible powers of evil must have held in Berlin on that night of August 1, 1914, after the Kaiser had thrown down his pen!

PEN-PORTRAIT OF THE ARCHDUKE FERDINAND

THEN the Archduke Ferdinand of Austro-Hungary, whose assassination was the ostensible cause of this devastating war—what kind of man

was he? Quite a different person from the Crown Prince, and yet, so far as I could judge, just as little worthy of the appalling sacrifice of human life which his death has occasioned.

Not long before his tragic end I spent a month under the same roof with him, and though the house was only an hotel, it was situated in a remote place, and though I was not in any sense of the Archduke's party, I walked and talked frequently with most of the members of it, and so, with the added help of daily observation, came to certain conclusions about the character of the principal personage.

A middle-aged man, stiff-set, heavy-jawed, with a strong step, and a short manner; obviously proud, reserved, silent, slightly imperious, self-centred, self-opinionated, well-educated in the kind of knowledge all such men must possess, but narrow in intellect, retrograde in sympathy, a stickler for social conventions, an almost unyielding upholder of royal rights, prerogatives, customs, and usages (although by his own marriage he had violated one of the first of the laws of his class, and by his unfailing fidelity to his wife continued to resist it), superstitious rather than religious, an immense admirer of the Kaiser, and a decidedly hostile critic of our own country—such was the general impression made on one British observer by the Archduke Ferdinand.

The man is dead; he took no part in the war,

except unwittingly by the act of dying, and therefore one could wish to speak of him with respect and restraint. Otherwise it might be possible to justify this estimate of his character by the narration of little incidents, and one such, though trivial in itself, may perhaps bear description. The younger guests of the hotel in the mountains had got up a fancy dress ball, and among persons clad in all conceivable costumes, including those of monks, cardinals, and even popes, a lady of demure manners, who did not dance, had come downstairs in the habit of a nun. This aroused the superstitious indignation of the Archduke, who demanded that the lady should retire from the room instantly, or he would order his carriage and leave the hotel at once.

Of course, the inevitable happened—the Archduke's will became law, and the lady went upstairs in tears, while I and two or three others (Catholics among us) thought and said, "Heaven help Europe when the time comes for its destinies to depend largely on the judgment of a man whose bemuddled intellect cannot distinguish between the morality of the real world and of an entirely fantastic and fictitious one."

ONE OF THE OLDEST, FEEBLEST, AND LEAST CAPABLE OF MEN

THAT time, as we now know, never came, but a still more fatal time did come—the cruel, ironical, and sinister time of July 28, 1914, when one of the oldest, feeblest, and least capable of living men, the Emperor of Austria, under pretence of avenging the death of the heir-presumptive to his throne, signed with his trembling hand, which could scarcely hold the pen, the first of his many proclamations of war, and so touched the button of the monstrous engine that set Europe aflame.

The Archduke Ferdinand was foully done to death in discharging a patriotic duty, but to think that the penalty imposed on the world for the assassination of a man of his calibre and capacity for usefulness (or yet for the violation of the principles of public safety, thereby involved) has been the murdering of millions of men of many nationalities, the destruction of an entire kingdom, the burning of historic cities, the impoverishment of the rich and the starvation of the poor, the outraging of women and the slaughter of children, is also to think that for the past 365 days the destinies of humanity have been controlled by demons, who must be shrieking with laughter at the stupidities of mankind.

Thank God, we are not required to think any-

thing quite so foolish, although we cannot escape from a conclusion almost equally degrading. Victor Hugo used to say that only kings desired war, and that with the celebration of the United States of Europe we should see the beginning of the golden age of Peace. But the events of the tremendous days from July 28 to August 4, 1914, show us with humiliating distinctness that though Kaisers, Emperors, Crown Princes, and Archdukes may be the accidental instruments of invisible powers in plunging humanity into seas of blood, a war is no sooner declared by any of them, however feeble or fatuous, than all the nations concerned make it their own. That was what happened in Central Europe the moment Austria declared war on Serbia, and the history of man on this planet has no record of anything more pitiful than the spectacle of Germany—"sincere, calm, deep-thinking Germany," as Carlyle called her, whose triumph in 1870 was "the hopefullest fact" of his time—stifling her conscience in order to justify her participation in the conflict.

"GOOD GOD, MAN, DO YOU MEAN TO SAY . . ."

"WE have tried in vain to localize the just vengeance of our Austrian neighbour for an abominable Royal murder," said the Germans,

knowing well that the Royal murder was nothing but a shameless pretext for an opportunity to test their strength against the French, and give law to the rest of Europe.

"Let us pass over your territory in order to attack our enemy in the West, and we promise to respect your independence and to recompense you for any loss you may possibly sustain," said Germany to Belgium, without a thought of the monstrous crime of treachery which she was asking Belgium to commit against France.

"Stand aside in a benevolent neutrality, and we undertake not to take any of the possessions of France in Europe," said Germany to Great Britain, without allowing herself to be troubled by so much as a qualm about the iniquity of asking us to trade with her in the French colonies. And when we rejected Germany's infamous proposals, and called on her to say if she meant to respect the independence of Belgium, whose integrity we had mutually pledged ourselves to protect, her Chancellor stamped and fumed at our representative, and said, "Good God, man, do you mean to say that your country will go to war for a scrap of paper?"

A GERMAN HIGH PRIEST OF PEACE

Nor did the theologians, publicists, and authors of Germany show a more sensitive conscience than her statesmen. One of the theologians

was Adolf Harnack, professor of Church History in Berlin and intimate acquaintance of the Kaiser. Not long before the war he published a book entitled "What is Christianity?" which began with the words, "John Stuart Mill used to say humanity could not be too often reminded that there was once a man named Socrates. That is true, but still more important it is to remind mankind that a man of the name of Jesus Christ once lived among them." On this text the book proceeded to enforce the practical application of Christ's teaching to the modern world, and particularly to propound his doctrine of the wickedness and futility of violence, which led the author to the conclusion that it was "not necessary for justice to use force in order to remain justice."

Somewhat later Professor Harnack came to this country to attend, if I remember rightly, a World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh, and the memory of him which abides in our northern capital is that of a high priest and prophet of the new golden age that was dawning on the world—the age of universal brotherhood and peace. But no sooner had war come within the zone of Germany than this man signed (if he did not write) a manifesto of German theologians which told "evangelical Christians abroad" that the German "sword was bright and keen," that Germany was taking up arms to establish the justice of her cause and that ever through the storm and horror of the coming conflict the

German people, with a calm conscience, would kneel and pray :

"Hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

"WE SHALL NEVER MASSACRE BELGIAN WOMEN"

ONE of the writers who performed the same kind of moral somersault was Gerhart Hauptmann, author of a Socialist drama called "The Weavers," and, rumour says, protégé (what frightful irony!) of the Crown Prince. Hauptmann knew well (none better) that a vast proportion of the human family live perpetually on the borderland of want, and that of all who suffer by war the poor suffer most. Yet he wrote (and a degenerate son of the great Norwegian liberator, Björnsen, published) a letter, in which, after telling the poor of his people that "heaven alone knew" why their enemies were assailing them, he called on them (in effect) to avenge unnameable atrocities, which he alleged, without a particle of proof, had been committed on innocent Germans living abroad, and then said, in allusion to Mr. Maeterlinck, "I can assure him that, although 'barbarous Germans,' we shall never be so cowardly as to massacre or martyr the Belgian women and children."

This was written in August 1914, at the very hour, as the world now knows, when the German soldiers in Liège were shooting, bayoneting, and burning alive old men and little children, raping nuns in their convents and young girls in the open streets. But the invisible powers of evil have no mercy on their instruments after they have worked their will, and Time has turned them into objects of contempt.

Nor were the German people themselves, any more than their master-spirits and spokesmen, spared the shame of their duplicity in those early days of August 1914. A large group of them, including commercial and professional men, drew up a long address to the neutral countries, in which they said that down to the eleventh hour they had "never dreamt of war," never thought of depriving other nations of light and air or of thrusting anybody from his place. And yet the ink of their protest was not yet dry when they gave themselves the lie by showing that down to the last detail of preparation they had everything ready for the forthcoming struggle.

Englishmen who were in Berlin and Cologne on July 31, and August 1 (before any of the nations had declared war on Germany), could see what was happening, though no telegrams or newspapers had yet made known the news. A tingling atmosphere of joyous expectation in the streets; the cafés and beer-gardens crowded with civilians in

soldiers' uniforms; orchestras striking up patriotic anthems; excited groups singing "Deutschland über Alles," or rising to their feet and jingling glasses; then the lights put out, and a general rush made for the railway stations—everybody equipped, and knowing his duty and his destination.

THE OLD GERMAN ADAM

It was the old historic story of German duplicity, and the nations of Europe had no excuse for being surprised. When the Prussian Monarchy was first bestowed on the relatively humble family of the Hohenzollerns, they found their territory for the most part sterile, the soil round Berlin and about Potsdam—the favourite residence of the Margravès—a sandy desert that could scarcely be made to yield a crop of rye or oats, so they set themselves to enlarge and enrich it by help of an army out of all proportion to the size and importance of their State. The results were inevitable. When war becomes the trade of a separate class it is natural that they should wish to pursue it at the first favourable opportunity of conquest. That opportunity came to Prussia when Charles VI died and the Archduchess Maria Theresa succeeded to her father by virtue of a law (the Pragmatic Sanction), to which all the Powers of Europe had subscribed.

Frederick had subscribed to it. But, nevertheless, in the name of Prussia, without any proper excuse or even decent pretext, he took possession of Silesia, thereby robbing the ally whom he had bound himself to defend, and committing the same great crime of violating his pledged word, which Germany has now committed against Belgium.

But there was one difference between the outrages of 1740 and 1914. The great barrator made no hypocritical pretence of desiring peace. "Ambition, interest, the desire of making people talk about me carried the day, and I decided for war," he said. It was reserved for Harnack and Hauptmann, not to speak of the Kaiser, to cant about the responsibilities of "Kultur" (that harlot of the German dictionary, debased by all ignoble uses), about the hastening of the kingdom of heaven, and about the German sword being sanctified by God. But the old German Adam remained, and when, two days before the declaration of war with France, the German soldiers were flying to the Belgian frontier there was no thought of the Archduke Ferdinand or of the doddering old man on the Austrian throne, whose paternal heart had been sorely wounded. Germany was out to rob France of her colonies—to rob her, and the Germans knew it.

"A few centuries may have to run their course," said their own poet Goethe (who surely knew the German soul), "before it can be said of

the German people, 'It is a long time since they were barbarians.'"

Such, then, were some of the events in the great drama of the war which took place in Germany before the rising of the curtain. Not a theologian, a philosopher, an historian, or a poet to recall the past of his country, to warn it not to repeat the crime of a century and a half before, which had stained its name for ever before the tribunals of man and God; not a statesman to remind a generation that was too young to remember 1870 of the miseries and horrors of war, for (alas for the welfare of the world!) the one great German voice that could have done so with searching and scorching eloquence, the voice of Bebel, had only just been silenced by the grave. And so it came to pass that Germany, in the last days of July 1914, presented the pitiful spectacle of a great nation being lured on to its moral death-agony amid canting appeals to the Almighty, and wild outbursts of popular joy.

A CONVERSATION WITH LORD ROBERTS

MEANTIME what had been happening among ourselves? The far-off murmur of the approaching wind had been heard by all of us, but as none can hope to describe the effect on the whole

Empire, perhaps each may be allowed to indicate the character of the warning as it came to his own ears. It was at Naples, not long after the event, that I heard how the late King had felt about his last visit to Berlin. I was then on my way home from Egypt, where I had spent some days at Mena, while Lord Roberts was staying there on his way back from the Soudan. He seemed restless and anxious. On two successive mornings I sat with him for a long hour in the shade of the terraces which overlook the Pyramids discussing the "German danger." After the great soldier had left for Cairo he wrote asking me to regard our conversations as confidential; and down to this moment I have always done so, but I see no harm now (quite the reverse of harm) in repeating the substance of what he said so many years ago on a matter of such infinite momentousness.

"Do you really attach importance to this scare of a German invasion?" I asked.

"I'm afraid I do," said Lord Roberts.

"You think an enemy army could be landed on our shores?"

"As things are now, yes, I think it could."

"Do you think you could land an army on the East Coast of England and march on to London?"

"Yes, I do."

"In a thick fog, of course?"

"Without a fog," said Lord Roberts.

After that he described in detail the measures we ought to take to make such an attack impossible and I hasten to add that, so far as I can see and know, the precautionary measures he recommended have all been taken since the outbreak of the war.

"WE'LL FIGHT, AND FIGHT SOON"

By that time I had, in common with the majority of my countrymen who travelled much abroad, been compelled to recognize the ever-increasing hostility of the German and British peoples whenever they encountered each other on the highways of the world—their constant cross-purposes on steamships, in railway trains, hotels, casinos, post and telegraph offices—making social intercourse difficult and friendship impossible. The overbearing manners of many German travellers, their aggressive and domineering selfishness, which always demanded the best seats, the best rooms, and the first attention, was year by year becoming more and more intolerable to the British spirit. It cannot be said that we acquiesced. Indeed, it must be admitted that our country-people usually met the German claims to be the supermen of Europe with rather unnecessary self-assertion. If an unmannerly German pushed before us at the counter of a booking-office we pushed him back; if he shouted

over our shoulders at a telegraph office we told him to hold his tongue; and if, in stiflingly hot weather, he insisted (as he often did) on shutting up again and again the window of a railway carriage after we had opened it for a breath of air, we sometimes drove our elbow through the glass for final answer—as I saw an English barrister do one choking day on the journey between Jaffa and Jerusalem.

These were only the straws that told how the wind blew, but they were disquieting symptoms nevertheless to such of us as felt, with Professor Harnack and his colleagues at the Edinburgh Conference, that by blood, history and faith, the German and British peoples were brothers (ugly as it sounds to say so now), each more closely bound to the other in the world-task of civilization than with almost any other nation.

"If we are brothers we'll fight all the more fiercely for that fact," we thought, "and, God help us, we'll fight soon."

"*HE* KNOWS, DOESN'T HE?"

I WAS staying in a neutral country at an hotel much frequented by the German governing classes when an English newspaper proprietor, after a visit to Berlin, published in his most popular journal a map of a portion of Northern

Europe in order to show at sight his view of the extent of the forthcoming German aggression, The paper was lying open between a group of gentlemen whose names have since become prominent in relation to the war when I stepped up to the table. The men were obviously angry, although laughing immoderately. "Look at that," said one of them, pointing to the map and running his finger down the coasts of Holland, Belgium and France to Calais. "*He* knows, doesn't he?"

And then, after a general burst of derisive laughter, came a bitter attack on British journalism ("The scaremongering of that paper is doing more than anything in the world to make war between Germany and England"), a still fiercer and more bitter assault on our Lords of the Admiralty, who had lately proposed a year's truce in the building of battleships ("Tell your Mr. Churchill to mind his own business, and we'll mind ours"), and, finally, a passionate protest that Germany's object in increasing her navy was not to enlarge her empire, but merely to keep the seas open to her trade. "Why," said one of the men, "nine-tenths of my own business is with London, and if England could shut up our ships I should be a ruined man in a month." "Quite so," said another, "and so far as German people go that's the beginning and end of the whole matter."

WE BELIEVED IT

We believed it. I am compelled to count myself among the number of my countrymen who through many years believed that story—that the accident of Germany's disadvantageous geographical position, not her desire to break British supremacy on the sea, made it necessary for her to enlarge her navy. I did my best to believe it when I had to sail through the Kiel Canal in a steamer from Cuxhaven to Copenhagen, which was forced to shoulder her way through an ever-increasing swarm of German battleships. I did my best to believe it when I had to sail under the threatening fortresses of Heligoland which stood anchored out at the mouth of the Bight like a mastiff at the end of his chain snarling at the sea. I did my best to believe it when I had to travel to Cologne by night, and the darkened railway carriages were lit up by fierce flashes from gigantic furnaces which were making mountains of munitions for the evil day when frail man would have to face the murderous slaughter of machine-guns. I did my best to believe it even in Berlin when German friends of the scholastic classes accounted for their tolerance of conscription and of the tyranny of clanking soldiery in the streets, the cafés, and the hotels on the ground of disciplinary usefulness rather than military necessity.

And then there was the human charm of some German homes to soothe away suspicion—the scholar's quiet house (beyond the clattering parade-ground at Potsdam) where we clinked glasses and drank "to all good friends in England," and the sweet simplicity of the little town in Westphalia, with its green fields and its sweetly-flowing river, where the nightingale sang all night long, and where, in the midst of musical societies, Goethe Societies and Shakespeare Societies, it was so difficult to think of Germany as a nation dreaming only of world-power and dominion. Even yet it strikes a chill to the heart to recall those German homes as scenes of prolonged duplicity. I prefer not to do so. But all the same I see now that the wings of war were already approaching them, and that the German people heard their far-off murmur long before ourselves—heard it and told us nothing, perhaps much less and worse than nothing.

THE FALLING OF THE THUNDERBOLT

Into such an unpromising atmosphere, of national hostility the war came down on us in July 1914, like a thunderbolt. In spite of grave warnings few or none in this country were at that moment giving a thought to it. On the contrary, we were thinking of all manner of

immeasurably smaller things, for Great Britain, although governing more than one-fifth of the habitable globe, has an extraordinary capacity for becoming absorbed in the affairs of its two little islands. It was so in the autumn of 1914, when we thought Home Rule and Land Reform covered all our horizon, although a thunder-cloud that was to silence these big little guns had already gathered in the sky.

Perhaps it was not altogether our fault if secret diplomacy had too long concealed from us the storm that was so soon to break. That kind of surprise must never come to us again. Many and obvious may be the dangers of allowing the public to participate in delicate and difficult negotiations between nations, but if democracy has any rights surely the chief of them is to know step by step by what means its representatives are controlling its destiny. We did not hear what was happening in the Cabinets of Europe, under that miserable disguise of the Archduke's assassination, until the closing days of July. Consequently, we reeled under the danger that threatened us, and were not at first capable of comprehending the cause and the measure of it.

"What is this wretched conspiracy in Serbia to us, and why in God's name should we have to fight about it?" we thought. Or perhaps, "We've always been told that treaties between

nations are safeguards of peace, but here, heaven help us, they are dragging us into war."

So general was this sentiment of revolt during the last tragic days that it is commonly understood to have extended to the Cabinet. Six members are said to have opposed war. One of them, a philosopher and historian of high distinction, could not see his way with his colleagues, and retired from their company. Another, who came from the working classes, is understood to have resigned from thought of the sufferings which any war, however justifiable, must inevitably inflict upon the poor. A third, a lawyer in a position of the utmost authority, is believed to have had grave misgivings about our legal right to call Germany to account. And I have heard that a fourth, who had been prominent as a pacifist in the days of an earlier conflict, had written a letter to a colleague as late as the evening of August 1, saying that a war declared merely on grounds of problematical self-interest would create such an outcry in Great Britain as had never been heard here before—leaving us a divided and, therefore, easily vanquished people.

THE PART CHANCE PLAYED

But chance plays the largest part in the drama of life, and accident often confounds the plans of men. Not feeling entirely sure of his letter the

pacifist Minister put it in his pocket when he dressed that night to go out to dinner. And when he sat down at table he found himself seated next to the able, earnest, and passionately patriotic Minister for Belgium. Perhaps he was urging some objections to British intervention, when his neighbour said: "But what about Belgium? You have promised to protect her, and if you don't do so she will be destroyed."

That raised visions of the work of the little nations; memories of their immense contributions to human progress from the days of Israel downwards; thoughts of the vast loss to liberty, to morality, to religion, and to all the other fruits of the unfettered soul that would come to the world from the over-riding of the weak peoples by the strong. The result was swift and sure—the letter in the Minister's pocket never reached the important person to whom it was addressed.

Only God knows whether this period, however short, of indecision among our people, and particularly among our responsible statesmen, with the consequent delay in dispatching a determined warning to Germany ("Hands off Belgium,") contributed to the making of the war. But it is at least an evidence of our desire for peace, and a sufficient assurance that if unseen powers were working on our side also, they were the powers of good. Yet so strangely do

the invisible forces confound the plans of men that the crowning proof of this came two days later—on August 3, in the Commons—when our Foreign Minister defined the British position, and practically declared for war.

It is not idle rumour that the Government went down to the House that day expecting to be resisted. The sequel was a startling surprise. Sir Edward Grey's speech was far from a great oration. It gave the effect of being unprepared as to form, so loosely did the vehicle hang together, the sentences sometimes coming with strange inexactitude for the tongue of one whose written word in dispatches has a clarity and precision that have never been excelled. But it had the supreme qualities of manifest sincerity and transparent honesty, and it derived its overwhelming effect from one transcendent characteristic of which the speaker himself may have been quite unconscious. It spoke to the British Empire as to a British gentleman. "You can't stand by and do nothing while the friend by your side is being beaten to his knees. You can't let a mischievous and unprincipled buccaneer tread into the dust the neighbour whom he has joined with you in swearing to protect?" There was no resisting that. Our own interest might leave us cold; we might even be sceptical of our danger. But we were put on our honour, and every man in the House with the instincts

of a gentleman was swept away by that appeal as by a flood.

"WHY ISN'T THE HOUSE CHEERING?"

THEN came our Prime Minister's passionate, fiery, yet dignified and even exalted denunciation of the proposal of Germany that we should trade with her in our neutrality by committing treachery to France and Belgium—("To accept your infamous offer would be to cover the glorious name of England with undying shame"); then the announcement of the ultimatum sent by Great Britain to Germany demanding an assurance that the neutrality of Belgium should be respected; and finally that speech of John Redmond's, which, spoken on the very top of the crisis that had threatened to bring a fratricidal war into Ireland, has been, perhaps, the most thrilling and dramatic utterance yet produced by the war. "I tell the Government they may take every British soldier out of Ireland to meet the enemy of the Empire. Ireland's sons will take care of Ireland. The Catholics of the South will stand shoulder to shoulder with their Protestant fellow-countrymen of the North to fight the common foe."

It was another appeal to the gentleman in the British nation, and in one moment it swept the bitter waters of the Home Rule crisis out of all

sight and memory. I have heard a Cabinet Minister say that, as he listened to Redmond's speech, he was surprised at the silence with which it was received. "Why isn't the House cheering?" he had asked himself. But all at once he had felt his eyes swimming and his throat tightening, and then he had understood.

THE NIGHT OF OUR ULTIMATUM

Our nation knew everything now, and had made her choice, yet the twelve hours' interval between noon and midnight of August 4 were perhaps the gravest moments in her modern history. I am tempted, not without some misgivings, but with the confidence of a good intention, to trespass so far on personal information as to lift the curtain on a private scene in the tremendous tragic drama.

The place is a room in the Prime Minister's house in Downing Street. The Prime Minister himself and three of the principal members of his Cabinet are waiting there for the reply to the ultimatum which they sent to Germany at noon. The time for the reply expires at midnight. It is approaching eleven o'clock. In spite of her "infamous proposal," the Ministers cannot even yet allow themselves to believe that Germany will break her pledged word. She would be so

palpably in the wrong. It is late and she has not yet replied, but she will do so—she must. There is more than an hour left, and even at the last moment the telephone bell may ring and then the reply of Germany, as handed to the British Ambassador in Berlin, will have reached London.

It is a calm autumn evening, and the windows are open to St. James's Park, which lies dark and silent as far as to Buckingham Palace in the distance. The streets of London round about the official residence are busy enough and quivering with excitement. We British people do not go in solid masses surging and singing down our Corso, or light candles along the line of our boulevards. But nevertheless all hearts are beating high—in our theatres, our railway stations, our railway trains, our shops, and our houses. Everybody is thinking, "By twelve o'clock to-night Germany has got to say whether or not she is a perjurer and a thief."

Meanwhile, in the silent room overlooking the park time passes slowly. In spite of the righteousness of our cause, it is an awful thing to plunge a great empire into war. The miseries and horrors of warfare rise before the eyes of the Ministers, and the sense of personal responsibility becomes almost unsupportable. Could anything be more awful than to have to ask oneself some day in the future, awakening in the middle of the

night perhaps, after rivers of blood have been shed, "Did I do right after all?" The reply to the ultimatum has not even yet arrived, and the absence of a reply is equivalent to a declaration of war.

THE THUNDERSTROKE OF FATE

SUDDENLY one of the little company remembers something which everybody has hitherto forgotten—the difference of an hour between the time in London and the time in Berlin. Midnight by mid-European time would be eleven o'clock in London. Germany would naturally understand the demand for a reply by midnight to mean midnight in the country of dispatch. Therefore at eleven o'clock by London time the period for the reply will expire. It is now approaching eleven.

As the clock ticks out the remaining minutes the tension becomes terrible. Talk slackens. There are long pauses. The whole burden of the frightful issues involved for Great Britain, France, Belgium, Russia, Germany—for Europe, for the world, for civilization, for religion itself, seems to be gathered up in these last few moments. If war comes now it will be the most frightful tragedy the world has ever witnessed. Twenty millions of dead perhaps, and civil life crippled for a hundred years. Which is it to be, peace

or war? Terrible to think that as they sit there the electric wires may be flashing the awful tidings, like a flying angel of life or death, through the dark air all over Europe.

The four men are waiting for the bell of the telephone to ring. It does not ring, and the fingers of the clock are moving. The world seems to be on tiptoe, listening for a thunder-stroke of Fate. The Ministers at length sit silent, rigid, almost petrified, looking fixedly at floor or ceiling. Then through the awful stillness of the room and the park outside comes the deep boom of "Big Ben." Boom, boom, boom! No one moves until the last of the eleven strokes has gone reverberating through the night. Then comes a voice, heavy with emotion, yet firm with resolve, "It's war."

When the clock struck again (at midnight) Great Britain had been at war for an hour without knowing it.

If I have done wrong in lifting the curtain on this private scene, I ask forgiveness for the sake of the purpose I put it to—that of showing that it was not in haste, not in anger, but with an awful sense of responsibility to Great Britain and to humanity that our responsible Ministers drew the sword of our country.

THE MORNING AFTER

If Mr. Maeterlinck's theory is sound, that this war is the visible reflection of a vast, invisible conflict, what a gigantic battle of the unseen forces of good and evil must have been raging throughout the universe when Europe rose on the morning of August 5, 1914! Think what had happened. While the light was dawning, the sun was rising, and the birds were singing over Europe, the greater nations were preparing to turn a thousand square miles of it into a gigantic slaughter-house. After forty years of unbroken peace, in which civilization, as represented by law, science, surgery, medicine, art, music, literature, and above all religion, in their ancient and central home, had been striving to lift up man to the place he is entitled to in the scheme of creation, war had suddenly stepped in to drag him back to the condition of the barbarian. From this day onward he was to live in holes in the ground, to be necessarily unclean, inevitably verminous, and liable to loathsome diseases. Although hitherto law-abiding, and perhaps even pious, with an ever-developing sense of the value and sanctity of human life, he was henceforward to take joy in the destruction of thousands of his fellow-creatures by devilish machines of death, and not to shrink from an opportunity of thrusting his bayonet down the throat of his enemy. He

was to set fire to churches, to throw images of Christ into the road, and, showing no mercy to old men and women and children, to destroy all and spare none. And why? Ostensibly because one quite commonplace Austrian gentleman had been foully murdered, but really because a vain and ambitious and rapidly increasing nation, living on an arid and insufficient soil, had come to consider themselves the master-spirits of humanity, and therefore entitled to possess the earth, or at least give law to all other nations.

"We are doing wrong, but it is necessary to do wrong, and we shall make amends as soon as our military necessities have been served."

"YOUR KING AND COUNTRY NEED YOU"

WHAT a mockery! What a waste! What a hideous reversion! What a confession of blank failure on the part of civilization, including morality and religion! But, happily, the invisible powers of evil had not got it all their own way, even on that morning of August 5. Out of the very shadow of battle great things were already being born among the children of men, and chief among them were the spirits of sacrifice and brotherhood. Even the cruel loss of nearly all that makes human life worth living—cleanli-

ness and purity and exemption from foul disease—could be borne for the defence of truth and freedom. And then it was worth a world of suffering to realise the first-fruits of that golden age of brotherhood among all the nations of the earth (except those of our enemy) which has been the peace-dream of humanity for countless centuries.

We in Great Britain have no reason to be ashamed of how our country answered the call. A few years before the outbreak of war I talked about conscription with a British admiral in the cabin of his flagship. "There's not the slightest necessity for it in this country," said the admiral. The moment war was declared the whole nation would rise to it. A great thrill would pass over our people from end to end of the land, and we should have millions flocking to the colours.

The old sailor proved to be a true prophet. None of us can ever forget the spontaneous response in August 1914, to the cry, "Your King and country need you." To such as, like myself, are on the shadowed side of the hill of life, and therefore too old for service, it was a profoundly moving thing to see how swiftly our immense voluntary army sprang (as by a miracle) out of the earth, to look at the long lines of young soldiers passing with their regular step through the streets of London, to think of the situations given up, of the young wives and little children

living at home on shortened means, and of the risk taken of life being lost just when it is most precious and most sweet.

What was the motive-power that impelled the young manhood of Great Britain to this tremendous sacrifice? The thought of our country's danger? The danger to France? The danger to Belgium? The fact that a man named Palmerston had pledged his solemn word for them long years before they were born, or even the mothers who bore them were born, that they would go to their deaths rather than allow a great crime to be committed or England's oath be broken? I don't know. I do not believe anybody knows. But I am not ashamed of my tears when I remember it all, and sure I am that in those first critical days of the war the invisible powers of justice must have been fighting on our side.

THE PART PLAYED BY THE BRITISH NAVY

PERHAPS the first of the flashes as of lightning by which we have seen the drama of the past 365 days is that which shows us the part played by the British Navy. What a part it has been! Do we even yet recognize its importance? Have our faithful and loyal Allies a full sense of its tremendous effect on the fortunes of the cam-

paign? On Sunday, August 2, two days before the dispatch of Great Britain's ultimatum to Germany, we saw thousands of our naval reserve flying off by special boats and trains to their ships on our east and south coasts. On Monday, August 3, the British Navy had taken possession of the North Sea.

It was a legitimate act of peace, yet never in this world was there a more complete, if bloodless, victory. The great German North Sea fleet, which (according to a calculation) had been constructed at a cost of £300,000,000 sterling, to keep open the seas of the world to German trade; the fleet which had, in our British view, been built with the sole purpose of menacing British shores, was shut up in one day within the narrow limits of its own waters!

In the light of what has happened since it is not too much to say that if the British Fleet had taken up its cue only forty-eight hours later the north coast of France would have been bombarded, every town on our east coast from Aberdeen to Dover would have been destroyed, and Lord Roberts's prophecy of German invasion would have been fulfilled. But, thank God, the watch-dogs of the British Navy were there to prevent that swift surprise. They are there (or elsewhere) still, silently riding the grey waters in all seasons and all weathers, waiting and watching and biding their time, and meanwhile (in

spite of the occasional marauding of submarines, the offal of fighting craft) keeping the oceans free to all ships except those of our enemies. And now, when we hear it said, as we sometimes do, that Great Britain holds only thirty-five miles of land on the battle-front in Flanders, let us lift our heads and answer, "Yes, but she holds thirty-five thousand miles of sea."

THE PART PLAYED BY BELGIUM

One of the earliest, and perhaps one of the most inspiring, of the flashes as of lightning whereby we saw the drama of the war was that which revealed the part played by Belgium. Has history any record of greater heroism and greater suffering? Such courage for the right! Such strength of soul against overwhelming odds and the criminal suddenness of surprise! Although the world has been told by Germany's spokesmen, including Herr Ballin, Prince von Bülow, and even Professor Harnack (all "honourable men," and the last of them a churchman), that down to a few days before the outbreak of hostilities "not one human being" among them had "dreamt of war," it is the fact that within a few hours of the dispatch of Germany's ultimatum to Belgium, before the ink of it could yet be dry and while the period of England's ultimatum in

defence of Belgian integrity was still unexpired, the German legions were attacking Liège.

It was a cowardly and contemptible assault, but what a resistance it met with! A little peace-loving, industrial nation, infinitely small and almost utterly untrained, compared with the giant in arms assailing it, having no injury to avenge, no commerce to capture, no territory to annex, desiring only to be left alone in the exercise of its independence, stood up for six days against the invading horde, and hurled it back.

But war is a crude and clumsy instrument for the defence of the right, and after a flash of Belgium's unexampled bravery we were compelled to witness many flashes of her terrible sufferings. Liège fell before overwhelming numbers, then Namur, Termonde, Brussels, Louvain, and, last of all, Antwerp. What a spectacle of horror! The harvests of Belgium trodden into the earth, her beautiful cities and ancient villages given up to the flames, her historic monuments, which had been associated with the learning and piety of centuries, razed to the ground; and, above everything in its pathos and pain, the multitudes of her people, old men, old women, young girls, and little children in wooden shoes, after the unnameable atrocities of a brutalized, infuriated, and licentious soldiery, flying before their faces as before a plague!

WHAT KING ALBERT DID FOR KINGSHIP

But there were flashes of almost divine light in the black darkness of Belgium's tragedy, and perhaps the brightest of them surrounded the person of her King. What King Albert did in those dark days of August 1914, to keep the soul of his nation alive in the midst of the immense sorrow of her utter overthrow his nation alone can fully know. But we who are not Belgians were thrilled again and again by the inspired tones of a great Spirit speaking to his subjects with that authority, dignity, and courage which alone among free nations are sufficient to unite the people to the Throne.

"A country which defends its liberties in the face of tyranny commands the respect of all. Such a country does not perish."

What King Albert did for Belgium in the stand he made against German aggression is partly known already, and will leave its record in history, but what he did at the same time for kingship throughout the world, as well as in his country, can only be realized by the few who are aware that almost at the moment of the outbreak of war the Belgian Courts (much to the unmerited humiliation of Belgium) were on the eve of such disclosures in relation to the life and death of the King's predecessor as would

certainly have shaken the credit of monarchy for centuries.

Nobody who ever met the late King Leopold could have had any doubt that he was a great man, if greatness can be separated from goodness and measured solely by energy of intellect and character. I see him now as I saw him in the garden of a house on the Riviera, the huge, unwieldy creature, with the eyes of an eagle, the voice of a bull and the flat tread of an elephant, and I recall the thought with which I came away: "Thank God that man is only the King of a little country! If he had been the sovereign of a great State he would have become the scourge of the world."

After King Leopold's death, accident brought me knowledge of astounding facts of his last days which were shortly to be exposed in Court—of the measure of his unnatural hatred of his children; of his schemes to deprive them of their rightful inheritance; of his relations with certain of his favourites and his death-bed marriage to one of them; of the circumstances attending the surgical operation which immediately preceded the extinction of his life; of the burning of endless documents of doubtful credit during the night before the knife was used; of the intrigues of women of questionable character over the dying man's body to share the ill-got gold he had accumulated in the Congo, and finally of his end, not in

his palace, but in a little hidden chalet, alone save for one scheming woman and one calculating priest. What a story it was, whether true or false, or (as is most probable) partly true and partly false, of shame, greed, lust, and life-long duplicity! And all this dark tale was (one way or other) to be told in the cold light of open Court, to the general discredit of monarchy, by showing the world how contemptible may be some of the creatures who control the destinies of mankind.

But the war and King Albert's part in it saved Belgium from that unmerited obloquy. The modest, retiring, studious, almost shy but heroic young sovereign who, with his valiant little band, is fighting by the side of our own king's soldiers, and the soldiers of the Republic of France, has sustained the highest traditions of kingship. He may have lost his country at the hands of a great Power, drunk with pride, but he has won Immortality. He may have no more land left to him than his tent is pitched upon, but his spiritual empire is as wide as the world. He may be a king without a kingdom, but he still reigns over a kingdom of souls.

"WHY SHOULDN'T THEY, SINCE THEY WERE ENGLISHMEN?"

THE next flash as of lightning that revealed to us the progress of the drama of the past 365 days came at the end of the first month of the war with the terrible story of Mons. That touched us yet more closely than the tragedy of Belgium, for it seemed at first to be our own tragedy. Between the departure of an army and the first news of victory or defeat there is always a time of exhausting suspense. At what moment our first Expeditionary Force had left England no one quite knew, but after we learned that it had landed in France we waited with anxious hearts and listened with strained ears.

We heard the tramp of the gigantic German army, pouring through the streets of Brussels, fully equipped down to its kitchens, its smoking coffee-wagons, its corps of gravediggers, and, of course, its cuirassiers in burnished helmets that were shining in the autumn sun. The huge, interminable, apparently irresistible multitude! Regiment after regiment, battalion after battalion, going on and on for hours, and even days—the mighty legions of the nation that a few days before had "never so much as dreamt" of war!

At last we had news of our men. Against overwhelming odds they had fought like heroes—why shouldn't they, since they were Englishmen?—

but had been compelled to fall back at length, and were now retreating rapidly, some reports said flying in confusion, broken and done. What? Was it possible? Our army thrown back in disorder? Our first army, too, the flower of the fighting men of the world? It was too monstrous, too awful!

The news was cruelly, and even wickedly, exaggerated, but nevertheless it did us good. He knows the British character very imperfectly who does not see that the qualities in which it is unsurpassed among the races of mankind are those with which it meets adversity and confronts the darkest night. Within a few days of the report that our soldiers were falling back from Mons, the old cry "Your King and country need you" went through the land with a new thrill, and hundreds of thousands of free men leapt to the relief of the flag.

There has been nothing like it in the history of any nation. And it is hard to say which is the more moving manifestation of that moment in the great drama of the war—the spontaneous response of the poor who sprang forward to defend their country, though they had no more material property in it than the right to as much of its soil as would make their graves, or the splendid reply of the rich whose lands were an age-long possession, and often the foundation of their titles and honours.

"BUT LIBERTY MUST GO ON, AND . . . ENGLAND"

WHAT startling surprises! We of the lower, the middle, or the upper-middle classes had come to believe that too many of the young men of our nobility had grown effeminate in idleness and selfish pleasure indulged in on the borderland of a kind of aristocratic Bohemia, but, behold! they were fighting and dying with the bravest. We had thought too many of their young women (as thoughtless and capricious creatures of fashion) had sacrificed the finest bloom of modest and courageous womanhood in luxury and self-indulgence; but, lo! they were hurrying to the battlefields as nurses, and there facing without flinching the scenes of blood and horror, of foul sights and stenches, which make the bravest man's heart turn sick.

Some of the scenes at home in those last days of August and early days of September were yet more affecting. The first of our casualty lists had been published, and they were terrible. They hit the old people hardest, the old fathers and old mothers who had given all, and had nothing left—not even a little child to live for. At the railway stations, when fresh troops were leaving for the front, you saw sights which searched the heart so much that you felt ashamed

to look, feeling they opened sanctuaries in which God's eye alone should see.

Old Lady So-and-So seeing her youngest son off to Flanders. She has lost two of her sons in the war already, and Archie is the last of them. The dear old darling! It is pitiful to see her in her deep black, struggling to keep up before the boy. But when the train has left the platform and she can no longer wave her handkerchief she breaks down utterly. "I've seen the last of him," she says; "something tells me I've seen the last of him. And now I've given everything I have to the country."

Ah! that's what you have all got to do, or be prepared to do, you brave mothers of England, if you have to defeat a desperate enemy, who stoops to any method, any crime.

Then old Lord Such-a-One at Victoria to meet the body of his only son being brought back from the hospital at Boulogne. How proud he had been of his boy! He could remember the day he captained for Eton at Lord's, or perhaps rowed stroke—and won—for Cambridge. And now on the field in Flanders. . . . He had seen it coming, though. He had thought of it when the war broke out. "Ours is an old family," he had told himself, "four hundred years old, and my son is the last of us. If I let him go to the war my line may end, my family may stop . . . but then

liberty must go on, civilization must go on, and . . . England!"

Yes, it must be night before the British star will shine.

THE PART PLAYED BY FRANCE

PERHAPS the next great flash as of lightning whereby we saw the drama of the past 365 days was that which revealed at its sublimest moment the part played by France. In those evil days of July 1914, when German diplomacy was carrying on the indecent pretence of quarrelling with France about Austria's right to punish Serbia for the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand, there were Frenchmen still living who had vivid memories of three bloody campaigns.

Some could remember the Crimean War. More could recall the Italian War of 1859, which brought the delirious news of the victory of Magenta, and closed with Solferino, and the triumphant march home through the Place de la Bastille, and down the Rue de la Paix. And vast numbers were still alive who could remember 1870, when the Emperor was defeated at Wörth and conquered at Sedan; when Paris was surrounded by a Prussian army, when the booming of cannon could be heard on the boulevards; when tenderly nurtured women, who had never

thought to beg their bread, had been forced by the hunger of their children to stand in long queues at the doors of the bakers' shops; when the city was at length starved into submission, and the proud French people, with their immemorial heritage of fame, were compelled to permit the glittering Prussian helmets to go shining down their streets.

A new generation had been born to France since even the last of these events, but was it with a light heart that she took up the gage which Germany so haughtily threw down? Indeed, no! Never had France, the bright, the brilliant, the cheerful-hearted, shown the world a graver face. A few students across the Seine might shout "À Berlin! À Berlin!" just as our boys in khaki chalked up the same address on their gun carriages. Idlers in blouses along the quays might scream the "Marseillaise." Gangs of ruffians in back streets might break the windows of the shops of German tradespeople. Some bitter old campaigners might talk about revenge. But when the drums beat for the French regiments to start away for Alsace and the Belgian frontier, the heart of France was calm and steadfast.

"This is a fight for the right, for France, and for the freedom of our souls!"

THE SOUL OF FRANCE

THEN when the men had gone there came that anxious silence in which every ear was strained to catch the first cry from the army. Would it be victory or defeat? In the strength of her new-born spirit France was ready for either fate. The streets of Paris were darkened; the theatres were shut up; the cafés were ordered to close at nine o'clock; the sale of absinthe was prohibited that Frenchmen might have every faculty alert to meet their destiny; and the principal hotels were transformed into hospitals for the wounded that would surely come.

They came. We were allowed to see their coming, and in those early days of the war, before the Red Cross companies had got properly to work, the return of the first of the fallen among the French soldiery made a terrible spectacle. At suburban stations, generally in the middle of the night, long lines of third-class railway carriages, as well as rectangular, box-shaped cattle wagons, such as in conscript countries are used for purposes of mobilization, would draw up out of the darkness.

Instantly hundreds of pale, wasted, generally bearded, and often wounded faces would appear at the windows, crying out for coffee or chocolate. Then the cattle wagons would be unbolted, and the great doors thrown back, disclosing six or

eight men in each, lying outstretched on straw, with their limbs swathed in blood-stained bandages, and their eyes glazed with pain. They were the brave fellows who, a few weeks before, had gone to Flanders in the pride and prime of their strength. In some cases they had lain like that for two whole days on their long way back from the fighting line, with no one to give them meat or drink, with nothing to see in the darkness of their moving tomb and nothing to hear, except the grinding of the iron wheels beneath them, and the cries of the comrades by their side.

"Mon Dieu! Que de souffrances! Qui l'aurait cru possible? O mon Dieu, aie pitié de moi."

THE MOTHERHOOD OF FRANCE

STILL the soul of France did not fail her. It heard the second approach of that monstrous Prussian horde, which, like a broad, irresistible tide, sweeping across one half of Europe, came down, down, down from Mons until the thunder of its guns could again be heard on the boulevards. And then came the great miracle! Just as the sea itself can rise no higher when it has reached the top of the flood, so the mighty army of Germany had to stop its advance thirty kilomètres north of Paris, and when it stirred again

it had to go back. And back and back it went before the armies of France, Britain, and Belgium, until it reached a point at which it could dig itself into the earth and hide in a long serpentine trench stretching from the Alps to the sea.

Only then did the spirit of France draw breath for a moment, and the next flash as of lightning showed her offering thanks and making supplications before the white statue of Jeanne d'Arc in the apse of the great cathedral of Notre Dame, sacred to innumerable memories. On the Feast of St. Michael 10,000 of the women of Paris were kneeling under the dark vault, and on the broad space in front of the majestic façade, to call on the Maid of Orleans to intercede with the Virgin for victory. It was a great and grandiose scene, recalling the days when faith was strong and purer. Old and young, rich and poor, every woman with some soul that was dear to her in that inferno at the front—the Motherhood of France was there to pray to the Mother of all living to ask God for the triumph of the right.

"Jesus, hear our cry for our country! Justice for France, O God!"

And in the spirit of that prayer the soul of France still lives.

FIVE MONTHS AFTER

THE next of the flashes as of lightning that revealed the drama of the past 365 days came to us at Christmas. The war had then been going on five months, showing us many strange and terrible sights, but nothing stranger and more terrible than the changed aspect of warfare itself. A battlefield had ceased to be a scene of pomp and of personal prowess, with the charging of galloping cavalry, the clash of glittering arms, and the advancing and retiring of vast numbers of soldiery. It was now a broad and desolate waste, in which no human figure was anywhere visible as far as the eye could reach—a monstrous scar on the face of the globe, such as we see in volcanic countries, only differing in the evidence of design that came of long, parallel lines of turned-up soil, which were the trenches wherein hundreds of thousands of men lived under the surface of the ground. Over this barren waste there was almost perpetual smoke, and through the smoke a deafening cannonading, which came of the hurling through the air of scythes of steel, called shells. Sometimes the shells were burying themselves unbroken in the empty earth, but too often they were scouring the trenches, where they were bursting into jagged parts and sending up showers of horrible fragments which had once been the limbs of living men.

Such was warfare by machinery as the world caught its first, full, horrified sight of it between the beginning of August and the end of December 1914. But even out of that maelstrom of horror there had been glimpses of great things—great heroisms, great victories, and great proofs of the power to endure. A rigid censorship, rightly designed to keep back from the enemy the information that would endanger the lives of our soldiers, was also keeping us in ignorance of many glorious incidents of the war such as would have thrilled us up to our throbbing throat. But some of them could not possibly be concealed, so we heard of the gallant stand of the dauntless sons of our daughter Canada, and we saw our great old warrior, Lord Roberts, going out to the front in his eighty-third year to visit his beloved Indian troops, dying as was most fit on the battlefield, within sound of the guns in the war he had foretold, and then being brought home, borne through the crowded streets of London and buried under the dome of St. Paul's, amid the homage of his King and people.

THE COMING OF WINTER

THEN, as the year deepened towards winter, the rains came, torrential rains such as we thought we had never known the like of before.

We heard that the trenches were flooded, and that our soldiers were eating, sleeping, and fighting ankle-deep (sometimes knee-deep) in water. At night, on going to our white beds at home, we had remorseful visions of those slimy red ruts in Flanders where our boys were lying out in the drenching rain under the heavy darkness of the sky. It was hard to believe that human strength could sustain itself against such cruel conditions, and indeed it often failed.

Towards Christmas tens of thousands of our men had to be brought home to our hospitals, many of them wounded, but not a few suffering from maladies which made them unfit for military service. The accident of being asked to distribute presents enabled me to see and talk with hundreds of them. It was a sweet and exhilarating yet rather nerve-racking experience. These young fellows, who had looked on death in its most horrible aspects, having had it for their duty to kill as many Germans as possible, and then to eat and sleep as if nothing had occurred—had they been degraded, brutalized, lowered in the scale of human creatures by their awful ordeal?

The sequel surprised me. The veil of mist with which a London winter enshrouds the beginnings of night and day had only just risen when on Christmas morning I reached the wounded soldiers' ward in the first of the hospitals

I visited. The sweet place was decked out with holly and mistletoe. Forty or fifty men were lying there in their beds, some bandaged about the head, a few about the face, more about the body, arms, and legs. None of them seemed to be in serious pain, and nearly all were cheerful, even bright, boyish, and almost childlike. What stories they had to tell of the inferno they had come from! It was hell, infernal hell. They would go back, of course, when they were better, and had to do so, but if anybody said he *wanted* to go back he was telling a damn'd lie.

One boy, scarcely out of his teens, with soft, womanly eyes, light hair, and a face that made me sure he must be the living image of his mother, had had a narrow escape. After being wounded he had been taken prisoner to a farmhouse. Nobody there had done anything for him, and at length, after many hours, watching his opportunity, he had crept into the darkness and got back to the British trenches by crawling for nearly a quarter of a mile on hands and knees.

Another young soldier, an Irishman, told me a brave story, such as might have been allowed, I thought, to scratch and scrape its way through the thorn hedge of the strictest censorship. It was a story of the great days before the armies had dug themselves into the earth like rabbits. Perhaps I had heard something about it? I had.

Eight hundred of his cavalry regiment had ridden full gallop into a solid block of the enemy, making a way through them as wide as Sackville Street. At length the Germans in front had dropped their rifles and held up their hands, whereupon our men had ceased to slay. But, being unable to rein in their frantic horses, they had been compelled to gallop on. Then, while their backs were turned, the treacherous Huns had picked up their rifles and fired on them from behind, killing many of our best men.

"And what did you do then?"

"Turned back and——"

"And what?"

"Took one man alive, sor."

"And the rest?"

"Left them there, sor."

"And how many of you got back?"

"Less than two hundred, sor."

CHRISTMAS IN THE TRENCHES

THEN Christmas in the trenches—we had glimpses of that, too. The people who governed nations from their Parliament Houses might have doubts about the peace-dream of the poets, the Utopia of universal brotherhood which gleams somewhere ahead in the far future of humanity, but the soldiers on the battlefields, even in the

welter of blood and death, had somehow heard the call of it.

The appeal of the Pope for a truce to hostilities during the days sacred to the Christian faith had fallen on deaf ears in the Cabinets of Europe. In that zone of mutual deception which is another name for war, neither of the belligerents could trust the other not to take an unfair advantage of any respite from slaying that might be called in the name of Christ, and, therefore, the armies must continue to fight. But the men in the trenches had found for themselves a better way. When Christmas Eve came they began—German and British—to talk about Christmas Eves which they had spent at home. Visions arose of crowded streets, of shops decorated with holly and mistletoe, of churches with little candle-lit Nativities, of Christmas-trees at home laden with fairy lamps and presents, of children sitting up late to dance and laugh and then hanging up their stockings before going to bed to dream of Santa Claus, of church bells ringing for midnight mass, and, last of all, of the "waits" by the old cross in the market-place in the midst of the winter frost and snow.

Suddenly in one of the trenches some of the soldiers began to sing. They sang a Christmas carol, "While shepherds watched their flocks by night." The soldiers in the parallel trenches of the enemy heard it, knew what it was, and joined

in with another Christmas carol, sung in their own language. In a little while both sides were singing, each in its turn, listening and replying, all along the two dark gullies that stretched across blood-stained Europe. Then Chinese lanterns were lit and stuck up on the head of the trenches, and salutations were shouted across the narrow ground between. "Merry Christmas to you, Fritz, old man!" "Same to you, Tommy!" And then next morning, Christmas morning, in the grey light of the late dawn, some daring soul, clambering over the trench head, marched boldly up to the line of the enemy with the salutation of the sacred day. In another moment everybody was up and out, shaking hands, and posing for photographs, friend and foe, German and British.

After a while they became aware that the ground they were standing on was like an unroofed charnel-house, littered over with the bodies of their unburied dead. So they set themselves to cover up their comrades in the earth, never asking which was British and which German, but laying them all together in the everlasting brotherhood of death—that English boy whose mother was waiting for him in England, and this German lad whose young wife was weeping in his German home.

My God, why do men make wars?

THE COMING OF SPRING

But perhaps, as Zola says, it is only the soft-hearted philosophers who are loud in their curses of war, and the truer wisdom was that of the stoical ancients, who could look with indifference on the massacre of millions. To keep manly, to remind ourselves that the generations come and go, that after all people die, and that more die one year than another—this should be the wise man's way of reconciling himself to the inhumanities of war. It is horrible doctrine, but certainly nature seems to speak with that voice, and hence the pang that came to us with the next great flash as of lightning, which showed us the battle-front at the beginning of the spring.

The long lines in the West had hardly changed so much as a single point to north or south since October 1914. Yet what horrors of conflict the intervening months had witnessed, bloody in their progress, though barren in their results! The storms of the spring (which in much of Northern Europe is only another name for a second winter) had gone through it all. Our soldiers had suffered frightfully, and some of us at home, awakening in the middle of stormy nights, had thought we heard the booming of far-off guns under the thunder of the sky.

Three millions of men were dead by this time, and that belt of green country, which many of us had crossed with light hearts a score of times,

was nothing now but a vast graveyard stretching from the foot of the Swiss mountains to the margin of the North Sea. Here a charred and blackened mass of stones, which had once been a group of houses ; there a cottage by the roadside, once sweet and pretty under its mantle of wild roses, now hideous with a gaping hole torn in its walls, and its little bed visible behind curtains that used to be white. And yet Nature was going on the same as ever—hardly giving a hint that the Great Death had passed that way. Our boys at the front wrote home that the leaves were beginning to show on the trees, that the grass was growing again, and that in the lulls of the cannonading they could hear the birds singing.

NATURE GOES HER OWN WAY

We found it heart-breaking. But it has been always so. I was in Naples during the whole period of the last great eruption of Vesuvius, and, looking through the gloom of the heavens, piled high with the whorls of fire and smoke that were covering the Vesuvian valleys and villages with a grey shroud, waist deep, of volcanic dust, I thought the face of Nature in that sweet spot could never be the same again ; but when I went back to it a year later I could see no difference. I sailed south through the Straits of Messina a few weeks before the earthquake, and, returning

north a few months later, I looked eagerly for the change which I imagined must have been made by the frightful upheaval of the earth that had killed hundreds of thousands, and shaken the soul of the entire human family, but I could see no change at all, even through the strongest field-glasses, until I came within sight of the waste and wreckage of the little works of men. Yes, Nature goes her own way, winter and summer, seedtime and harvest, healing her own wounds, but taking no thought of ours.

Yet, cruel as Nature seemed to be at the beginning of the spring, it was not so cruel as man. With the better weather our enemies began to devise and put into operation new and more devilish methods of warfare. Perhaps this was a result of their fear, for there is no cruelty so cruel as the cruelty that comes of fear, and no inhumanity so inhuman. Having expressed themselves as shocked by our alleged use of dum-dum bullets, they were now ransacking their laboratory for gases that would burst the lungs of our soldiers, and for inflammable oils that would set them afire as if they were criminals tarred and feathered and tied to a stake. Their battleships, built to fight craft of their own kind, or at least fortresses capable of replying to their fire, were now sent out to bombard innocent watering-places lying breast open to the sea. Their air-craft, constructed for reconnaissances, were ordered to drop bombs out of the clouds on

to sleeping cities in the darkness of the night. And their submarines, tolerated by international courts only as weapons of attack on warships, were authorized to sink harmless merchantmen, without any word of warning, or any effort to save life. Could scientific knowledge under the direction of moral insanity go one step farther? Flying in the highest sky, hiding behind the densest clouds, stealing across the heavens in the dark hours, dropping fireballs on to the silent earth, sneaking back in the dawn; and then sailing through the womb of the great deep, rising like a serpent to spit death at innocent ships, diving to avoid destruction and scudding away under cover of the empty sea—what a spectacle of divine power at the service of devilish passion! It was difficult to believe that our enemies had not gone mad. They were no longer fighting like men, but like demons.

THE SOUL OF THE MAN WHO SANK THE *LUSITANIA*

THE crowning horror of Germany's barbarities came with the sinking of the *Lusitania*. Perhaps nothing less shocking could have made us see how much less cruel Nature is at her worst than man in his madness may be. Three years before the *Titanic* had been sunk on a clear and quiet night, because a great iceberg formed in the

frozen north had floated silently down to where, crossing the ship's course in mid-Atlantic, it struck her the slanting blow that sent her to the bottom. Thus a great, blind, irresistible force, operating without malice or design, had in that case destroyed more than a thousand human lives. But when the *Lusitania* was sunk in broad daylight, and nearly as many persons perished, it was because our brother man, in the bitterness of his heart and the cruelty of his fear, had been bent on committing wilful murder.

What is the present state of the soul of the person who perpetrated that crime? Can he excuse himself on the ground that he was obeying orders, or does his conscience refuse to be chloroformed into silence by that hoary old subterfuge? When he first saw the great ship sailing up in the sunshine, its decks crowded with peaceful passengers, and he rose like a murderer out of his hiding-place in the bowels of the sea, what were the feelings with which he ordered the torpedo to be fired? When, having launched his bolt, he sank and then rose again, and heard the drowning cries of his victims struggling in the water, what were the emotions with which he ran away? And when he returned to tell his story of the work he had done, with what dignity of manhood did he hold up his head in the company of Christian men? God knows—only God and one of his creatures.

Ten years after Christ a Latin author (Velleius

Paterculus) said, "The character of the Germans shows a terrible mixture of ferocity and infamy. It is a people born to lie."

THE GERMAN TOWER OF BABEL

For the credit of human nature we feel compelled, in sight of such enormities, to go back to Mr. Maeterlinck's theory that invisible powers of evil are using man for the execution of devilish designs. But if so, they have had no mercy on their creatures. We read that when, in fear of another flood, not trusting the promises of the Almighty, the children of Noah began to build a Tower of Babel, the Lord sent a confusion of tongues among them to bring their design to destruction. The excuses the Germans have offered for their barbarities suggest a confusion of intellect that can only lead to a like result. Has the world ever before listened to such whirlwind logic?

When a German submarine has sunk a British merchantman and left her crew to perish we have been told that she was performing a legitimate act of war. But when a British merchantman has mounted a gun in order to defend herself, she has been said to violate the law of nations. When British battleships have blockaded German ports they have been trying to starve sixty-five millions of German people. But when German sub-

marines have attempted to blockade British ports by drowning a thousand passengers of many nations on a British liner, they have been executing a just revenge. When a neutral nation in Europe has supplied foodstuffs and materials of war to Germany, she has been doing an act of simple humanity. But when the United States has supplied foodstuffs and materials of war to Great Britain she has been breaking the laws of her neutrality. When a brutal German officer has shot a British civilian in a railway train he has committed a justifiable homicide and become a proper person for promotion. But when a Belgian civilian has killed a German soldier who violated his daughter before his eyes he has been guilty of assassination and quite properly shot at sight. When Germany has refused to honour her name to a "scrap of paper" she has been a holy martyr obeying a law of necessity. But when England has honoured hers she has been a holy humbug, whose hypocrisy deserved to be exposed. Therefore God punish England! Above all, when God has crowned the arms of Germany with success on the battlefield, his most Christian Majesty, William the Pious, has always been with Him. Therefore God bless the Kaiser!

"Foreseeing my death," said Schopenhauer, "I make this confession, that I despise the German nation because of its infinite stupidity, and I blush to belong to it."

THE ALIEN PERIL

But out of this failure of logic on the part of "deep-thinking Germany" a danger came to us from nearer home than the battlefield. One of the most vivid flashes as of lightning whereby we have seen the drama of the past 365 days was that which, immediately after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, showed us the full depths of the "alien peril." Before the war we had had fifty thousand German-born persons living in our midst. They had enjoyed the whole freedom of our commerce, the whole justice of our law courts, and the whole protection of our police. Many of them had married our British women, who had borne them British children. Most of them had learned to speak our language, and some of us had learned to understand their own. A few had become British subjects, and many had been honoured by our King. Our music, literature, and art had become theirs. Shakespeare had, in effect, become a German poet, and Wagner a British composer. The barriers between our races had seemed to break down, and even such of us as had small hope of a golden age of universal brotherhood had begun to believe that marriage, mutual interest, education, and environment were making us one with these strangers within our gates.

Then came a startling awakening. We realized

beyond possibility of doubt that many thousands of our German aliens had been keeping up a dual responsibility, and that the chief of their two duties had been duty to their own country. We found beyond question that a settled system of espionage was at work in Great Britain, under the direction of the German authorities; that information which could only be of use in the event of invasion had for many years been gathered up by some of the people whom we had called our friends, and that day by day and hour by hour, as the war went on, secrets valuable to our enemy had been filtering through to Germany from influential places in this country.

What a shock to our sense of security, our pride, and even our self-respect! The horror of the discovery reached its highest point at the time of the sinking of the great liner, for then it was realized that there could be no limit to the expression of German cruelty. It is one of the effects of the spirit of cruelty to strike its victims with moral blindness. If it were possible that the German conscience could justify murder on the sea, why should it not justify it on land? Why should not our German governesses burn down the houses in which our children lay asleep? Why should not a German secretary attempt to assassinate one of our public ministers? War was war, and whatever was necessary was right.

"We are doing wrong, but it is necessary to do wrong, and necessity knows no law."

HYMNS OF HATE

About this time also we became conscious of a fierce, delirious, intoxicating hate of our people which was developing in the hearts of our enemies. Before the outbreaking of the war it had been Russia and the Russians who had (by inherited antipathy from the founder of the German Empire) been the chief objects of German hatred. Now it was Britain and the British. Hymns of Hate (our enemies called it "sacred hate") were composed, recited, and sung:

French and Russian, they matter not,
A blow for a blow, and a shot for a shot,
We love them not, we hate them not,
We love as one, we hate as one,
We have one foe, and one alone—
England!

England was not moved to retaliate in kind. We remembered what the German Churchmen had said about our Teutonic brotherhood, and allowed ourselves to believe that this was only the call of the blood in the German race—the mad, bad blood of fratricidal hate, the most devilish hate of all. We also reflected that it

was a form of hatred not unfamiliar in asylums for the insane, where it has always been equally tragic and pitiful in its effects, and certain to recoil on the sufferer's own head. But as no sane father of a family would make free of his children's nursery the deranged relative who required the protection and restraint of the padded room, we decided that there was only one safe way with our aliens as a whole—to shut them up.

God forbid that any of us should say that all our German aliens were under suspicion of criminal intentions. On the contrary, we know that some of them are among the sincere friends of Great Britain, passionately opposing Germany's objects in this war and loathing Germany's methods. We know, too, that a few belong to that rare company whose sympathies can rise even higher than nationality into the realm of "human empire." We also know that countless persons, long resident in this country, and deeply attached to the land of their adoption, have suffered unspeakable hardships from the accident of German origin. It is painful to think of some of the people who frequented our houses, whose houses we frequented, whose wives and children are our kindred, being shut up behind barbed wire in open encampments. But these are among the inevitable cruelties of a war for which we are not responsible. In putting the great body

of our enemy aliens under control we did no more than our plain duty to the soldiers who were fighting for us at the front. What will happen to them (and us) when the war is over, and they come out of their prisons, none can say. It seems as if the world can never be the same place as before—the devil has played too hard a game with it.

THE PART PLAYED BY RUSSIA

And then Russia! Distance from the scene of action, the great length of the line of operations and the vast area behind it have made it difficult or impossible for us to see the drama of the Russian campaign as we have seen that of France, Belgium, and our own Empire. But we have seen something, and it has been enough to give the lie to certain of the emphatic protestations with which Germany made war. We had heard it said by the German Chancellor that the fact that Russia was mobilizing in those last days of July 1914 made it impossible for Germany to ask Austria to extend the time-limit imposed upon Serbia—a time-limit which would have been indecent among civilized people if it had concerned nothing more serious than the destruction of a kennel of dogs suspected of rabies. But all the world knows now

that Russian mobilization was a process inevitably so slow that the German armies had flung themselves upon Belgium twelve days before the Russian advance began.

Then we had heard it said by the German Churchmen that in taking the side of Russia we, British and French people, leaders among the enlightened races, were helping Muscovite barbarians to oppose the cause of civilization. But since Louvain, Termonde, and Rheims, not to speak of the unnameable iniquities of Liège, the world knows where the barbaric spirit of Europe had its central home—in Berlin, not in Petrograd; in the proud hearts of the German over-lords, not the meek ones of the Russian peasantry.

THE SHADOW OF THE GREAT DEATH

The truth, as everybody knows who knows Russia, is that "barbarous," the classic taunt of the German against Russia, is, of all words, the least proper as a description of the Russian mind and character. I have myself been only once in Russia, but it was on a long visit and under conditions which were calculated, beyond anything that has happened since down to to-day, to reveal to me the whole secret of the Russian soul. In 1892, when the cholera had come sweeping up from the south, I travelled for

weeks that seemed like an eternity in the little towns of Galicia and the cities beyond the Russian frontier. The Great Death darkened my sky over many hundreds of miles of travel. I visited the plague spots where men's lives were being mown down at the devastating stride of 5000 deaths a week, and where men's hearts, the nerve, courage, sanity, and humanity of men, were being sapped and quenched and consumed by terror and panic and despair. I saw the Russian people under the black shadow and in the malign presence of the Great Death, living in the dark clouds of inquietude and dread and awe. And when my visit came to an end I left Russia with the feeling that, relatively short as my life among the Russian people had been, I knew them because I had been with them when their very souls lay bare.

What, then, did I see? A barbaric people? No, a thousand times, no! I saw an uneducated people; a neglected people; a people badly fed, badly housed, and badly protected from the cruelties of a rigorous climate; but not a people who had naturally one barbaric impulse, if by that we mean the "will to life" which animates the savage man. And I now say, with all the emphasis of which I am capable, that the last reproach that can rightly be flung at the Russian people, even the least enlightened of them, the Russian peasants, in the darkest reaches of their

vast country, is that they are barbarians. Deeds of cruelty and of barbarity there may be among the Russians, as there are among all peoples, and the dehumanizing conditions inevitable to warfare may perhaps increase the number of them, but the outrages of Louvain, Termonde, Rheims, and Liège are morally and physically impossible to the Russian race.

THE RUSSIAN SOUL

THE truth is, too, that there is not in the world a more religious people than the Russian—a people more submissive to what they conceive (not always wisely) to be the will of the Almighty, the governance of the unseen forces. As opposed to the average German intellect, which for the past fifty years has been struggling day and night to materialize the spiritual, the Russian intellect seems to be always trying to spiritualize the material. No one can doubt this who has seen the Russian peasants on their pathetic pilgrimages to the Holy Land, standing (among the lepers, uttering their clamorous lamentations) before the gates of the Garden of Gethsemane, or trooping in dense crowds down the steep steps to the underground Church of the Virgin. The literature of Russia, too, reflects this trait of the Russian soul, and not only in the works of

Pushkin, Gogol, Tourgeneiff, Tolstoy, Repin, Dostoyevsky, and Glinka, or yet in Kuprine, Gorki, Anoutchin, Merejkowsky, and Baranovsky, but in those simpler and perhaps cruder writings which speak directly to uneducated minds, the same striving after the spiritual is everywhere to be seen. Books like Treitschke's, Nietzsche's, and Bernhardi's would be impossible in Russia, not, heaven knows, because of their "intellectual superiority," which is another name for braggadocio, but because of their moral insensibility, their glorification of the physical forces of the body of man, which the Russian mind sets lower than the unseen powers of his soul.

THE RUSSIAN MOUJIK MOBILIZING

So the flashes as of lightning that have shown us the part Russia has played in the drama of the past 365 days have revealed a people acting under something very like a religious impulse. We have seen the moujiks being mobilized in remote parts of the vast country, and have found it a moving picture. It is probable that the war had been going on for weeks before they heard anything about it. Almost certainly they had no clear idea of where the fighting was, or what it was about, the theatre of the struggle being so far away and their ignorance of the world

outside their own little communities so profound and impenetrable. We may be sure that when the echo of the great war did at length reach them it was quite undisturbed by any foolish pretence associated with the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand (that lie could only be expected to impose on the enlightened peoples of the West) and concerned itself solely with the safety of Russia.

The humblest Russian is proud of Russia; proud that it is so big and powerful among the nations of the world. He will gladly die rather than see it made less, so deep is his devotion to the long-suffering giant whose blood is throbbing in his veins. Therefore, when the call of war came to the moujiks in their far-off homes, we saw them answering it as if it had been the call of their faith. First a service in the village church; then a procession behind the village pope to the village shrine ("Now go away and fight for Russia, my children"); then the setting off for the distant railway station, the mothers and young wives of the soldiers marching for miles by their sides, carrying their rifles and haversacks along the wide roads white with dust. What scenes of human pathos! For a long time the officers are indulgent to irregularities—have they not just left their own dear women behind them?—but at length the word of command rings out, and everybody not connected with

the army has to go back. Ah, those partings! Still, God is good! And hadn't Masha promised to burn a candle to the Virgin every day while her husband is away? Ivan will come back; yes, of course Ivan will come back, and by that time baby will be born, and then what joy, what lifelong happiness!

HOW THE RUSSIANS MAKE WAR

From some of the greater cities of Western Russia there came flashes of similar scenes. The memory of that time of the cholera is closely involved for me in the thought of these tragic days, and by the light of what I saw in Kief, in Sosnowitz, in Lublin, in Cracow, in Warsaw, and along the line of front in poor, stricken Poland, where, as I write, men are being mown down like grass, I seem to see what took place there at the beginning of August 1914, and is taking place now. I see the churches crowded and the congregations trailing out through the open porches into the churchyards around them. Old men and women who are too lame to struggle their way through the throng are lying under the open windows with their sticks and crutches stretched out beside them. Others outside are on their knees, following the services as they proceed within, clasping their hands, making

the sign of the Cross, giving the responses, and joining in the singing.

Inside the churches, where the women kneel on one side in their bright cotton head-scarves and the soldiers on the other in their long, dark coats, prayers are being said for Russia, that God will protect her and her "little Father," the Tsar, and all his faithful children, making the dark cloud that is on their horizon to pass them by unharmed. From porch to chancel they bend forward with their faces as near to the floor as their close crowding will permit. Then they sing. No one who has not been to Russia has ever heard such singing—no, not even in Rome in the Church of the Gesu as the clock strikes midnight on the last day of the year. There is no organ, and if there is a choir its voices are lost in the deep swell of the melancholy wail that rises from the people. Perhaps the morning is a bright one, and the sun is shining in dusty sheets of dancing light through the clerestory windows on to the altar ablaze with gold, twinkling behind its yellow candles and the bowed heads of the priests. When the service ends the soldiers form up in lines and march out through the kneeling crowds within and the overflowing congregations lying prone outside.

So do the Russians make war. Not generally to the beating of drums, or yet the singing of their searching national anthem, and assuredly not as bloodhounds hunting for prey, but in the spirit of

a simple people, often humble in their ignorance but always strong in their faith—in the certainty that there is something else in God's world besides greed and gold, something higher than "the will to power," something better for a nation than to enlarge its empire, and that is to possess its soul.

And now in their hour of trial let us salute our brave Allies in the East. Let us assure them of the sincerity of our alliance. We rejoice in their victories. We count their triumphs as our own. When we hear of their reverses our hearts are full. We feel that out of the storm of battle a great new spirit has been born into Russia, awakening her from a sleep of centuries. We feel, too, that a great new spirit of brotherhood has been born into the world, uniting the scattered and divided parts of it, and that there is no more moving manifestation of the unity of mankind than the fact that the Russian and British peoples, after long years of misunderstanding, are now fighting for the same cause from opposite sides of Europe. May they soon meet and clasp hands!

THE PART PLAYED BY POLAND

And then Poland. Down to the end of the first year of war the part played by Poland has been that of absolute martyr. Like the water-mill in Zola's story she has first been disabled by

the attack of her enemies and then destroyed by the defence of her friends. Three times the armies of the belligerents have rolled over her, and now that they are gone she lies stricken afresh, even yet more fiercely, under the famine and pestilence which have stalked in the wake of war.

No more pitiful and abject picture does the terrible conflict present. Without part or lot in the European quarrel, with little to gain and everything to lose by it, having no such right of choice as gave glory to the martyrdom of Belgium, Poland has had nothing to do but to endure.

At the beginning of the war, when the battery of German hatred was directed chiefly against Russia, the world was told that the measure of her barbarity was to be seen in the condition to which the Polish people had been reduced under Russian rule. But did the Harnacks, Hauptmanns, Ballins and von Bulows, who put forth this plea, count on our ignorance of Galicia, in which the condition of the Poles is immeasurably more wretched under the rule of their Ally, Austria?

In the fateful year 1892 I travelled much in Galicia, and saw something of the effects of Austrian government. My impressions of both were unfavourable. From points of natural wealth and beauty, Galicia is perhaps, of all countries, the least favoured of God. Shut out from the warm southern winds by the Carpathian

mountains, and exposed to the northern blasts that sweep down from the broad steppes of Russia, the long and narrow stretch of Galician territory is probably the most inhospitable region in the western world. Flat and featureless; with swampy and ague-stricken plains, unbroken by trees and hedges; with roads like canals, dissecting dreary wastes, black in the south, where the loam lies, light in the north where salt is found; with rivers without banks fraying into pools and ponds and marshes; with soppy fields in formal stripes like the patches of a patchwork quilt; with villages of log-houses, each having its cemetery a little apart, and its wooden crucifix like a gibbet at a space beyond—such is a great part of Galicia, the Polish province of Austria.

A PROVINCE WITHOUT A SOUL

But little as Nature has done to cheer the spirits of the Poles, who live under Austrian rule, what man has done is less. It is nothing at all, or worse than nothing. Thickly sown on the eastern frontier are many densely populated manufacturing towns, ugly and squat, and giving the effect of standing barefoot on the damp earth. As you walk through them they look like interminable lines of featureless streets, full of those sweating, screaming, squabbling masses of

humanity that take away all your pride in the dignity of man's estate. The prevailing colour is yellow, the dominant odour is noxious, the thoroughfares are narrow, and often unpaved. In the busier quarters the shops are sometimes spacious, but more frequently they are mere slits in the monotonous façades. When closed, as on Sunday, these slits give the appearance of a row of prison cells. When open they present crude pictures on the inner faces of their doors—pictures of boots, caps, trousers, stockings or corsets, a typology which seems to be more necessary than words to inhabitants who have not, as a whole, been taught to read.

And then the people themselves! Perhaps there is not in all the world a more hopeless-looking race, with their lagging lower lips, their dull grey eyes, their dosy, helpless, exanimate expression, suggesting that the body is half-asleep and the spirit no more than half-awake. To see them slouching along the streets, or sitting in stupefied groups at the doors of brandy-shops, passing a single bottle from mouth to mouth, is to realize how low humanity may fall in its own esteem under the rule of an alien government. To watch them at prayer in their little Catholic churches is to feel that they have been made to think of themselves as the least of God's creatures, unworthy to come to His footstool—always ready to kiss the earth, and never daring

to lift their eyes to heaven, having no right, and hardly any hope.

Such are the poorer and more degraded of the Poles in the Austrian crownland of Galicia, which has lately been swept by war (along the banks of the Vistula, the Dniester, and the Bug), and is now perishing of hunger, and being devastated by disease. And when I ask myself what has been the root-cause of a degradation so deep in a people who once laboured for the humanities of the world and upheld the traditions of Culture, I find only one answer—the suppression of nationality! In that fact lies the moral of Galicia's martyrdom. Let Belgium's nationality be suppressed as Germany is now trying to suppress it, and her condition will soon be like that of Austrian Poland. You cannot expect to keep the body of a nation alive while you are doing your best to destroy its soul.

THE SOUL OF POLAND

It is a fearful thing to murder, or attempt to murder, the soul of a nation. The call that comes to a people's heart from the soil that gave them birth is a spiritual force which no conquering empire should dare to kill. How powerful it is, how mysterious, how unaccountable, and how infinitely pathetic! The land of one's country

may be so bleak, so bare, so barren, that the stranger may think God can never have intended that it should be trodden by the foot of man, yet it seems to us, who were born to it, to be the fairest spot the sun shines upon. The songs of one's country may be the simplest staves that ever shaped themselves into music, yet they search our hearts as the loftiest compositions never can. The language of one's country (even the dialect of one's district) may be the crudest corruption that ever lived on human lips, yet it lights up dark regions of our consciousness which the purest of the classic tongues can never reach. Do we not all feel this, whatever the qualities or defects of our native speech—every Scotsman, every Irishman, every Welshman, nay, every Yorkshireman, every Lancashireman, every Devonshireman, when he hears the word and the tone which belong to his own people only? There are phrases in the Manx and the Anglo-Manx of my own little race which I can never hear spoken without the sense of something tingling and throbbing between my flesh and my skin. Why? Because it is the home-speech of my own island, and whatever she is, whatever fate may befall her, however she may treat me, she is my mother and I am her son.

Such is the mighty and mysterious thing which we call a nation's soul. Nobody can explain it, nobody can account for it, but woe to the pre-

sumptuous empire which tries to wipe it out. It can never be wiped out. Crushed and trodden on it may be, as Austria has crushed and trodden on the soul of Austrian Poland, and as Germany has crushed and trodden on the soul of Prussian Poland, when they have fallen so low in the scale of civilized peoples as to flog Polish school-children for refusing to learn their catechism and say their prayers in a language which they cannot understand. But to kill the soul of a nation is impossible. The German Chancellor could not do that when he violated the body of Belgium. And though Warsaw has fallen the fatuous Prince Leopold of Bavaria, with his preposterous proclamations, cannot kill the soul of Poland.

At Cracow in 1892 I tried to buy for one of my children the little Polish national cap, but after a vain search for it through many shops (where I was generally suspected of being a spy for the Austrian police), the cap was brought to me at night, in my private room, by shop-keepers who had been afraid to sell it openly in the day. At Wieliezhé, I, with some forty persons of various nationalities (including the usual contingent of detectives), descended the immense and marvellous salt-mine which is now used as a show place for visitors. After passing, by the flare of torches, down long galleries of underground workings, we were plunged into darkness by a rush of wind over a subterranean

river through which we had to shoulder our way on a raft. Then suddenly, no face being visible in that black tunnel under the earth, the Polish part of our company broke into a wild, fierce, frenzied singing of their national anthem which, in those days, they dare not sing on the surface and in the light: "Poland is not lost for ever; she will live once more."

No, Poland is not lost for ever! She will live once more!

THE OLD SOLDIER OF LIBERTY

And Italy! Although it is only since May that Italy has stood by our side on the battle-front, in an effort to avert from the world a new military domination, we have known from the beginning that her heart was with the Allies, and she was willing to stake all, when her time came, for the same principles of humanity and freedom. A Roman friend tells me that he heard an Italian statesman say, "Italy always meant war." We can well believe it. We have believed it from the first. On one of the early days of August, when a British regiment was passing through the streets of London on its way to Charing Cross, it was noticed that an old man in a red shirt and a peaked cap was marching with a proud step by the side of our soldiers. He

turned out to be a Garibaldian, who had been living many years in Soho. Having dug up from his time-beaten trunk the simple regimentals of the army of the Liberator, he had come out to walk with our boys on the first stage of their journey to France. In the person of that old soldier of liberty we saw and saluted Italy—Italy that had known what it was to make her own sacrifices for the right, and was now ready to show us her sympathy in this supreme crisis in our history.

But she had a trying, almost a tragic, time. For ten long months she lay under the quivering wing of war, in danger of attack from our enemies, and liable to misunderstanding among ourselves. She was party to a Triple Alliance which, ironically enough, bound her (up to a point) to her historic adversary, Austria, as well as to that Germany whose emperors had again and again sent their legions south in vain efforts to rule even the papacy from across the Rhine.

How that alliance came to be made, and remade, against the sympathies and aspirations of a free people is one of the mysteries of diplomacy which Italian history has yet to solve. Perhaps there was corruption; perhaps there was nothing worse than honest blundering; perhaps the frequent spectacular visits to Rome of the Kaiser William (who is almost Oriental in his

"sense of the theatre," and knows better, perhaps, than any European sovereign since Napoleon how to apply it to real life) played upon the eyes of the Italian race, always susceptible to grandiose exhibitions of power and splendour. But we cannot forget the old Austrian sore, and we remember what Antonelli is reported to have said to Pius IX before the outbreak of the campaign of 1859: "Holy Father, if the Italians do not go out to fight Austria, I believe, on my honour, the nuns will do so."

THE PART PLAYED BY ITALY

The Triple Alliance was a secret document, but everybody knew that it required Italy to join with Austria and Germany in the event of their being compelled to engage in a defensive war. Therefore the first question for Italy was whether the war declared by Austria against Serbia and by Germany against Belgium, although apparently aggressive, was in reality defensive. There was a further question for Italy—what would happen to her if she decided against her Allies? She did decide against them, thereby giving the lie direct to the Harnacks, Hauptmanns, Ballins, and von Bülows who had been telling the neutral nations that the war had been forced upon Germany. By all the

laws of nations Germany and Austria ought then, if they had honestly believed their own story, to have declared war on Italy. They preferred to wheedle her, to try to buy her, bribe her, corrupt her, body and soul.

They failed. After flooding the peninsula with lying literature, directed chiefly against ourselves, Germany sent back to the Italian capital its most astute statesman, who was married to a much-admired Italian woman. It was all in vain. Italy knew her own mind and had made reckoning with her own heart. She had begun with contempt for the nation which could invade Serbia, under the pretence of avenging the murder of the Archduke Ferdinand, and with loathing for the other nation which could violate Belgium after it had sworn to protect her, and now she went on to hatred and horror of the perpetrators of the outrages in Liège, in Louvain, and in Rheims, that were scorching men's eyes in the name of war.

Still, Italy, although separating herself from her former allies, was not yet taking sides against them. Why? If their war was an aggressive and unjustifiable one, why could not Italy say so at once with her sword as well as her pen? There was a period of uncertainty, impatience, even of misunderstanding among her own people. Whispers reached them that their King had said (he never had) that he had given

31285

his "kingly word" for it that if Italy could not fight with her former friends she should not fight against them. This was a blow to Italian aspirations, for Victor Emanuel III is the best-beloved man in Italy, the father of his people, whose heads would bow before his will even though their hearts were torn.

Then came negotiations with Austria about the restoration of provinces which had once belonged to Italy and were still inhabited by Italians. It looked like paltering and peddling, like sale and barter. The people were losing patience; they thought time was being wasted. Beyond the Alps men were dying for liberty in a mighty struggle against the worst tyranny that had ever threatened the world, yet Italy was doing nothing.

But the people did not know all. Even then their country was already at war within the limits of her own frontier—silently in her tailors' workshops, where uniforms were being sewn for the immense army she was soon to call into the field, audibly in the forges of Milan and Terni, where vast quantities of munitions were being hammered out for a long campaign.

HOW THE WAR ENTERED ITALY

THEN, by one of the most vivid, if pathetic, of the flashes as of lightning that have shown us the drama of the past 365 days, we saw the actual war come to Italy. It came in a profoundly impressive form—the dead body of young Bruno Garibaldi, grandson of the Liberator. Fighting for France, Bruno had fallen in a gallant charge at the front, and his brother, who was by his side, had carried his body out of the trenches and brought it home. We who know Rome do not need to be told how it was received there. We can see the dense mass of uncovered heads in the Piazza delle Terme, stretching from the doors of the railway station to the bronze fountain at the top of the Via Nazionale, and we can hear the deep swell of the Garibaldian hymn, which comes like a challenge as well as a moan from 50,000 throats. Not for the first time was a dead Garibaldi being borne through the streets of Rome, and those of us who remembered the earlier day knew well that with the body of this Italian boy the war had entered Italy.

Then, at a crisis in Italy's internal government, our enemy, having failed to buy, bribe, or corrupt Italy, began to threaten her. Out of the delirium of his intoxicated conscience, which no longer shrank from crime, he told Italy that

if she dared to break her neutrality her fate should be as the fate of Belgium. That frightened some of us for a moment. We thought of Venice, of Florence, of Assisi, of Subiaco, of Naples, and of Rome, and, remembering the methods by which Germany was beating and bludgeoning her way through the war, our hearts trembled and thrilled at a dreadful vision of the lovely and beloved Italian land under the heel of a ruthless aggressor—of the destruction of the history of Christendom as it had been written by great artists on canvas and by great architects in stone through the long calendar of nearly two thousand years. But we also thought of Savoy, of Palestro, of Casale, of Caprera, and of "Roma o morte," and told ourselves that, come what might, victory or defeat, the children of Victor Emanuel III would never allow themselves to buy the ease and safety of their bodies by the corruption and degradation of their souls.

THE ITALIAN SOUL

That was the great and awful hour when Italy stood on the threshold of her fate; but though Great Britain's heart was bleeding from the sacrifices she had already made, and had still to make, and though Italy's intervention meant so much to us, we did not feel that we had a right

to ask for it. And neither was it necessary that we should do so. The treaty that bound Italy to England was not written on a scrap of paper. It was in our blood, born of our devotion to humanity, to justice, to liberty, and to the memory of our great men. Therefore, with the world in arms about her, let Italy do what she thought best for herself, and the bond between us would not be broken!

How the sequel has justified our faith! And when the great hour struck at last, after ten months of suspense, and Italy—ready, fully equipped, united—found the voice with which she proclaimed war, what a voice it was! Eloquent voices she had had throughout, in her Press as well as in her legislative chambers—Morelli's, Barzini's, Albertini's, Malagodi's, not to speak of Sartorio's, Ferrero's, Annie Vivanti's, and many more—but it quickens my pulse to remember that it was the voice of a poet which at the final moment was to speak for the Italian soul.

Friends newly arrived from Italy tell me that not even in Rome (where one always feels as if one were living on the borderland of the old world and the new, with thousands of years behind and thousands of years in front) can anybody remember anything so moving as the substance and the reception of Gabriele d'Annunzio's speech from the balcony of the Hotel Regina. We can well imagine it. The

spirit of Time itself could have found no greater scene, no more thrilling moment. The broad highway on the breast of the hill going up to the Porta Pinciana, faced by the palace of the Queen Mother and flanked by the gardens of the Capuchin monastery, with the Colosseum, the Capitol and the Forum almost visible to the right—what a theatre to speak in!

There were 5000 persons below, all "Romans of Rome," and the Queen Mother was on her balcony. But the orator was worthy of his audience, and his theme. He had the past for his prologue, and the future for his epilogue. Cæsar, Brutus, Cicero, the story of the old oppression from which the world had freed itself after age-long tribulation, and then a picture of the new tyranny that was sweeping down from across the Rhine. What wonder if the warm-hearted Roman populace, to whom patriotism is a religion, were carried away by an appeal which seemed to come to them with the voice of Dante, Mazzini, Carducci, and Garibaldi from the very earth beneath their feet!

So on May 20, 1915, knowing well what the terrors of war were, and how remote the prospects of early victory, Italy took her place in arms by the side of the Allies. And now the heart of old Rome, so long perturbed, is tranquil. With heroic confidence she relies on her brave sons, led by her dauntless King, to justify her.

And when she hears the truculent boast of our enemy that after he has disposed of Russia, he will destroy Italy as a Power in Europe, she answers calmly, "Yes, when the last Roman capable of bearing arms lies dead in Roman soil —perhaps then, but not sooner."

THE PART PLAYED BY THE NEUTRAL NATIONS

And then the neutral countries—what is the part which they have played in the drama of the past 365 days? I think I may fairly claim to have had better opportunities than most people for studying one aspect of it, its moral aspect, and therefore I trust I may be forgiven if I make a personal reference. Seeing, in the earliest days of the war, that Germany was doing her best to divert the eye of the world from the crime she had committed in Belgium, and being convinced that Britain's hope both now and in the future lay in keeping the world's eye fixed on that outrage, I moved the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph* to the publication of "King Albert's Book."

What that great book was it must be quite unnecessary to say, but it may be permitted to the editor to claim that it constituted the first (as it may well be the final) impeachment of the

Kaiser before the bar of the nations for a crime in Belgium as revolting as that of Frederick the Great in Silesia and a thousandfold more fatal. After the publication of "KING ALBERT'S BOOK," Germany knew that before the tribunal of the civilized world she stood tried and condemned. But though representative men and women in thirteen different countries united within the covers of the historic volume to express their abhorrence of Germany's iniquity, the whole weight of the world's condemnation could not be included.

From many of the neutral nations there came pathetic cries of inability to join in the general protest. Famous men wrote that the neutrality of their countries imposed upon them the duty and the penalty of silence. "My brother is a member of our Government," wrote one illustrious man of letters, "and if I am not to get him into trouble I must hold my tongue." Another, whose German name, if it could be published, would carry weight throughout the world, said: "I know where my sympathy lies, and so do you, but I dare not speak, for I am a German-born subject, and to tell what is in my mind would be treason to my country." This message came from a remote place in Spain, the writer having been compelled to fly from France, because his blood was German, while unable to take refuge in Germany because his heart was French.

THE PART PLAYED BY THE UNITED STATES

PERHAPS the most tragic of these vistas of the sufferings of great souls in neutral countries came from the United States. Profoundly affecting were nearly all President Wilson's public utterances, even when, as sometimes occurred, our sympathy could not follow them. And certainly one of the most vivid of the flashes as of lightning, whereby we have seen the war in its moral aspect, was that which showed us the United States, at his proclamation, arresting for a whole day, on October 4, 1914, the immense and tumultuous activities of her vast continent in order to intercede with the Almighty to vouchsafe healing peace to His striving children.

It was a great and impressive spectacle. As I think of it I seem to feel the quieting of the headlong thoroughfares of Chicago, the hushing of the thud and drum of the overhead railways in New York, and then the slow ringing of the bells in the square tower of that old Puritan Church in Boston—all calm and peaceful now as a New England village on Sunday morning.

But truth to tell we of the belligerent countries were not deeply moved or comforted by America's prayers. We thought our cause was that of humanity, and the sure way to establish it was

by protest as well as prayer. We did not ask or desire that America should take up arms by our side. We did not wish to enlarge the area of the conflict that was deluging Europe in blood. Confident in the justice of our cause, we thought we knew that by the help of the Lord of Hosts, and by the strength of His stretched-out arm, the forces of the Allies would be sufficient for themselves. Neither did we wish to make a parade of our wounds to excite America's pity. With all our souls we believed that for every drop of innocent blood that was being shed outside the recognized area of battle the Avenger of blood would yet exact an awful penalty. But when humanity was being openly outraged, and conventions to which America had set her seal were being flagrantly violated, we thought, with Mr. Roosevelt, that it was the duty of the United States, as a Christian country, to step in with the expression of her deep and just indignation.

America was long in doing that. But, thank God, she did it at last, and for the courage and strength of the Notes which President Wilson (speaking with a voice that is no unworthy echo of the great one that spoke at Gettysburg) has lately sent to Germany on the sinking of the Lusitania, and the outrage thereby committed on the laws of justice and humanity, which are immutable, the whole civilized world (outside

the countries of our enemies) now salutes the United States in respect and reverence.

THE THUNDERCLAP THAT FELL ON ENGLAND

Among the flashes as of lightning that revealed to us the drama of the past 365 days, some of the most vivid were those that lit up the condition at home towards the end of Spring. The war had been going on ten months when it fell on our ears like a thunderclap that all was not well with us in England. In the ominous unrest that followed there was danger of serious division, with the risk of a breakdown in that national unity without which there could be no true strength. The result was a Coalition Government, uniting all the parties save one, followed by an appeal to the patriotism of the people through their purse.

Never before had Great Britain received such a response to her call. The first Cabinet in England that aimed at coalition had broken down in personal corruption, but the Cabinet now called into being was beyond the suspicion of even party interest. The first appeal to the purse of the British people had yielded one hundred and thirty millions in a year, but the appeal now made yielded six hundred millions

in a month. It was almost as if Great Britain had ceased to be a nation and become a family.

GREAT SCENES IN GREAT BRITAIN

Nor did the industries of the country, in spite of the lure of drink and the temptation to strikes, fall behind the spirit of the people. At the darkest moment of our inquietude the call of health took me for a tour in a motor-car over fifteen hundred miles of England, and though my journey lay through three or four of the least industrial and most placid of our counties, I found evidences of effort on every hand. The high roads were the track of marching armies of men in training; the broad moors were armed camps; the little towns were recruiting stations or depots for wagons of war; the land lay empty of workers with the hay crop still standing for want of hands to cut it, and the villages seemed to be deserted save by little children and the feeble, old men, who had nothing left to do but to wait for death.

The voice of the great war had been heard everywhere. From the remote hamlet of Clovelly the young men of the lifeboat crew had left for the front, and if the call of the sea came now it would have to be answered by sailors over sixty. In Barnstaple two large hoardings on the face of a public building recorded in golden letters the

names of the townsmen who had joined the colours. In every little shop window along the high road to Bath there were portraits of the King, Kitchener, Jellicoe, French, and Joffre, flanked sometimes by pictures of poor, burnt and blackened Belgium.

On the edge of Dartmoor, in Drake's old town, Tavistock, I saw a thrilling sight—thrilling yet simple and quite familiar. Eight hundred men were leaving for France. In the cool of the evening they drew up with their band, four square in the market-place under the grey walls of the parish church, a thousand years old. The men of a regiment remaining behind had come to see their comrades off, bringing their own band with them. For a short half-hour the two bands played alternately, "Tipperary," "Fall In," "We Don't want to Lose You," and all the other homely but stirring ditties with which Tommy has cheered his soul. The open windows round the square were full of faces, the balconies were crowded, and some of the townspeople were perched on the housetops. Suddenly the church clock struck eight, the hour for departure; a bugle sounded; a loud voice gave the word of command like a shot out of a musket; it was repeated by a score of other sharp voices running down the line, and then the two bands, and the men, and all the people in the windows, on the balconies and on the roofs (except such of

us as had choking throats) played and sang "For Auld Lang Syne." Was the spirit of our mighty old Drake in his Tavistock town that day?

"Come on, gentlemen, there's time to finish the game, and beat the Spaniards, too!"

A GLIMPSE OF THE KING'S SON

ONE glimpse at the end of my little motor tour seemed to send a flash of light through the drama of the past 365 days. It was of our young Prince of Wales, home for a short holiday from the front. I had seen the King's son only once before—at his investiture in Carnarvon Castle. How long ago that seemed! In actual truth "no human creature dreamt of war" that day, although the shadow of it was even then hanging over our heads.

Some of us who have witnessed most of the great pageants of the world thought we had never seen the like of that spectacle—the grey old ruins, roofless and partly clothed by lichen and moss, the vast multitude of spectators, the brilliant sunshine, the booming of the guns from the warships in the bay outside, the screaming of the seagulls overhead, the massed Welsh choirs singing "Land of my Fathers," and, above all, the boy of eighteen, beautiful as a fairy prince in his blue costume, walking hand in hand

between the King and Queen to be presented to his people at the castle gate.

And now he was home for a little while from that blackened waste across the sea, which had been trodden into desolation under the heel of a ruthless aggressor and was still shrieking as with the screams of hell. He had gone there willingly, eagerly, enthusiastically, doing the work and sharing the risk of every other soldier of the King, and he would go back, in another few days, although he had more to lose by going than any other young man on the battle-front—a throne.

But if he lives to ascend it he will have his reward. England will not forget.

When I hear people say that Great Britain is not yet awake to the fact that she is at war I wonder where they keep their eyes. If I had been a Rip Van Winkle, suddenly awakened after twenty years of sleep, or yet an inhabitant of Mars dropped down on our part of this planet, I think I should have known in any five minutes of any day since August 5, 1914, that Great Britain was at war. Such a spirit has never breathed through our Empire during my time, or yet through any other empire of which I have any knowledge. Everybody, or almost everybody, doing something for England, and few or none idle who are of military age except such as have heavy burdens or secret disabilities into which I dare not pry.

It is not alone in Flanders or on the North Sea that our country's battle is being fought, and when I think I hear the hammering on ten thousand anvils in the forges of Woolwich, Newcastle, and Glasgow, and the thud of picks in the coal and iron mines of Cardiff, Wigan, and Cleator Moor, where hundreds of thousands of men are working long shifts day and night, half-naked under the fierce heat of furnaces, sometimes half choked by the escaping fumes of fire-damp, I tell myself it is not for me, too old for active service and only able to use a pen, to dishonour England, and her Empire, in the presence of her Allies, or weaken her in the face of her enemies, by one word of complaint against the young manhood of my country.

THE PART PLAYED BY WOMAN

The latest and perhaps the most vivid of the flashes as of lightning which have revealed the drama of the past 365 days has shown us the part played by woman. What a part that has been! Nearly always in the histories of the great world-wars of the past the sympathy of the spectator has been more or less diverted from the unrecorded martyrdom of the myriads of forgotten women who have lost sons and husbands by the machinations of the few vain

and selfish women who have governed continents by playing upon the passions of men. Thank God, there has been nothing of that kind in this case. On the contrary, woman's part in this red year of the war has been one of purity, sacrifice, and undivided glory.

Towards the end of it we saw a procession through the streets of London of 30,000 women who had come out to ask for the right to serve the State. I do not envy the man who, having eyes to see, a heart to feel, and a mind to comprehend, was able to look on that sight unmoved. Every class of woman was represented there, the gently-born, the educated, and the tenderly-nurtured, as well as the humbly-born, the uneducated, and the heavily-burdened, the woman with the delicate, spiritual face, as well as the woman with the face hardened by toil. And they were marching together, side by side, with all the barriers broken down. It was not so much a procession of British women as a demonstration of British womanhood, and it seemed to say, "We hate war as no man can ever hate it, but it has been forced upon us all, so we, too, want to take our share in it."

THE WORD OF WOMAN

BUT long before July 17, 1915, woman's part in this war began. It began on August 5, 1914, when the first hundred thousand of our voluntary army sprang into being as by a miracle. The miracle (if I am asked to account for it) had its origin in the word of woman. Without that word we should have had no Kitchener's Army, for "on the decision of the women, above everything else, lay the issues of the men's choice." *

It needs little imagination to lift, as it were, the roofs off a hundred homes, and see and hear what was going on there in those early days of the war, after the clear call went out over England, "Your King and Country need you."

In the little house of a City clerk, married only a year before, the young wife is saying, "Yes, I think you ought to go, dear. It's rather a pity, so soon after the boy was born . . . just as you were expecting a rise, too, and we were going to move into that nice cottage in the garden suburb. But, then, it will be all for the best, and you mustn't think of me."

Or perhaps it is early morning in the flat of a young lawyer on the day he has to leave for the front. He is dressed in his khaki, and his wife, who is busying about his breakfast, is

* The *Times*.

rising to a sublime but heartbreaking cheerfulness for the last farewell. "Nearly time for you to go, Robert, if you are to get to the barracks by six. . . . Betty? Oh, no, pity to waken her. I'll kiss her for you when she awakes and say daddy promised to bring her a dolly from France. . . . Crying? Of course not! Why should I be crying? . . . Good-bye then! Good-bye! . . ."

Or perhaps it is evening in a great house in Belgravia, and Lady Somebody is saying adieu to her son. How well she remembers the day he was born! It was in May. The blossom was out on the lilacs in the square, and all the windows were open. How happy she had been! He had a long fever, too, when he was a child, and for three days Death had hovered over their house. How she had prayed that the dread shadow would pass away! It did, and now that her boy has grown to be a man he comes to her in his officer's uniform to say . . . Ah, these partings! They are really the death-hours of their dear ones, and the women know it, although, like Andromache, they go on "smiling through their tears!"

With what brave and silent hearts they face the sequel too! The mother of Sub-Lieutenant So-and-So receives letters from him nearly every other week. Such cheerful little pencil scribblings! "Dearest Mother, I have a jolly com-

fortable dug-out now—three planks and a truss of straw, and I sleep on it like a top." Or, perhaps, "You see they have sent me back to the Base after six weeks under fire, and now I have a real, *real* room, and a real, *real* bed!" The dear old darling! She puts her precious letters on the mantelpiece for everybody to see, and laughs over them all day long. But when night comes, and she is winding the clock before going upstairs, thinking of the boy who not so long ago used to sleep on her knees. . . . "Ah, me!"

And then the final trial, the last tragic test—the women are equal to that also. First, the letter in the large envelope from the War Office: "Dear Madam, the Secretary of State regrets to inform you that Lieutenant So-and-So is reported killed in action on . . . Lord Kitchener begs to offer you . . ." And then, a little later, from the royal palace: "The King and Queen send you their most sincere. . . ." Oh, if she could only go out to the place where they have laid . . . But then the Lord will know where to find His Own!

Somebody in Paris said the other day, "No one will ever make our women cry any more—after the war." All the springs of their tears will be dry.

THE NEW SCARLET LETTER

It is brave in a man to face death on the battle-field, instantaneous death, or, what is worse, death after long suffering, after lying between trenches, perhaps, on the "no-man's ground" which neither friend nor foe can reach, grasping the earth in agony, seeing the dark night coming on, and then dying in the cold shiver of the dawn. Yes, it is brave in a man to face death like that. But perhaps it is even braver in a woman to face life, with three or four fatherless children to provide for, on nothing but the charity of the State. Then battle is in the blood of man, and the heroic part falls to him by right, but it is not in the blood of woman, who shrinks from it and loathes it, and yet such is her nature, the fine and subtle mystery of it, that she flies to the scene of suffering with a bravery which far outstrips that of the man-at-arms.

On the breasts that have borne tens of thousands of the sons who have fallen in this war the Red Cross is now enshrined. It is the new scarlet letter—the badge not of shame, but glory. And "through the rolling of the drums" and the thundering of the guns a voice comes to us in this year of service and sacrifice whose message no one can mistake. Woman, who faces death every time she brings a man-child into the world, must henceforth know what is to be done with

him. It is her right, her natural right, and the part she has taken in this war has proved it.

AND . . . AFTER?

Such is the drama of the war as I have seen it. How far it has gone, when it will close and the curtain fall on it none of us can say. With five millions already dead, twice as many wounded, one kingdom in ruins, another desolate from disease, the larger part of Europe under arms, civil life paralysed, social existence overshadowed by a mourning that enters into nearly every household; with a war still in progress compared with which all other wars sink into insignificance; with a public debt which Pitt, Fox, and Burke (who thought £240,000,000 frightful) would have considered certain to sink the ship of State; with taxation such as our fathers never conceived possible—what will be our condition when this hideous war comes to an end?

It is dangerous to prophesy, but, as far as we can judge, the least of the results will be that we shall all be poorer; that great fortunes will have diminished and vast enterprises disappeared; that what remains of our savings will have a different value; that some of us who thought we had earned our rest will have to go on working; that the industrial classes will have a time

of privation; and that (most touching of human tragedies) the old and helpless and dependent among the very poor will more than ever feel themselves to be in the way, filling the beds and eating the bread of the children.

Yet none can say. It is one of the paradoxes of history that after the longest and most exhausting wars, the accumulation of the largest national debts and the imposition of the heaviest taxations, nations have rapidly become rich. Although 1817 was a time of extreme distress in these islands, England prospered after the Napoleonic wars. Although 1871 was a time of fierce trial in Paris, yet France recovered herself quickly after the war with Germany. And though the Civil war in America left poverty in its immediate trail, the United States have since amassed boundless wealth.

So do the nations, generation after generation, renew their strength even after the most prolonged campaigns. But beyond the economic loss there will in this case be the physical loss of ten millions, perhaps, of the young manhood of Europe dead, and ten other millions permanently disabled, with all the injury to the race thereby resulting; and beyond the physical loss there will be the intellectual loss in the ruthless destruction of those ancient monuments which had linked us with the past; and beyond the intellectual loss there will be the moral loss in the

uprooting of that sympathy of nation with nation which had seemed to unite us with the future. As a consequence of this war a great part of Europe will be closed to some of us for the rest of our natural lives, and the world will contain more than a hundred millions fewer of our fellow-creatures in whose welfare we shall take joy.

WAR'S SPIRITUAL COMPENSATIONS

But, thank God, there is another side to the picture, both for young and old. If we are to be poorer we shall be more free. If we are to be weak and faint from loss of blood we shall rest at night without dread of that shadow of the sword which has darkened the sleep of humanity for forty years. If the countries of our enemies are to be closed to some of us in the future, the countries of our Allies will be more than ever open; nay, they will be almost the same to us as our own. France will be our France, Italy our Italy, Belgium our Belgium, and the next time I, for one, sit by the stove in the log cabin of a Russian moujik on the Steppes, I shall feel as if I were in the thatched cottage of one of my own people in our little island in the Irish Sea. So does blood shed in a common cause break down the barriers of race and language and bind together the children of one Father.

The dead of our Allies become our dead, and our dead theirs. That Frenchman died to save my son; therefore he is my brother, and France is my country. "One's country is the place where they lie whom we loved."

Thus war, brutal, barbarous war, has its spiritual compensations, and pray heaven the present one may prove to have more than any other. If it does not, something will break in us after all we have gone through. Our faith in the invisible powers to bring a good end out of all this welter of blood and destruction has become a religion. It must not fail us if our souls are to live.

LET US PRAY FOR VICTORY

"It is good to pray for peace, but it is better to pray for justice. It is better to pray for liberty. It is better to pray for the triumph of the right, for the victory of human freedom." *

Then let us pray for victory over our enemies, having no qualms, no shame, and no remorse. We know that Christ pronounced a death sentence on war, and that as soon as Christianity shall have established an ascendancy war will cease. But if anybody tells us in the meantime that by Christ's law we are to stand aside while

* *New York Times.*

a strong Power, which is in the wrong, inflicts frightful cruelties upon a weak Power which is in the right, let us answer that we simply don't believe it. If anybody tells us that by Christ's law we are to permit ourselves to be trodden upon and trampled out of being by an empire resting on violence, let us answer that we simply don't believe it. If anybody tells us that by Christ's law we are not to oppose the gigantic ambition of a "War Lord" who claims Divine right to stalk over Europe in scenes of blood, rapacity, and impurity, let us answer that we simply don't believe it. If anybody tells us that Christ's words, "Resist not evil," were intended to say that spiritual forces will of themselves overcome all forms of war (including, as they needs must, crime, disease, and death) let us answer that we simply don't believe it.

Such a clumsy and dangerous interpretation of Christ's doctrine would put an end to government, to science, and to literature, and allow the worst elements of human nature to rule the world. It would also put Christianity on the scrap-heap—Christianity "with its benevolent morality, its exquisite adaptation to the needs of human life, the consolation it brings to the house of mourning and the light with which it brightens the mystery of the grave." *

God forbid that the very least of us should

* Macaulay.

say one word that would prolong the horrors of this terrible war. But it is just because we hate war that at the end of these 365 days we still think we must carry it on. It is just because our hearts are bleeding from the sacrifices we have made, and have still to make, that we feel they must be compelled to bleed.

Let us, then, pray with all the fervour of our souls for Belgium, for Poland, for Italy, for Russia, for France, but above all, for our own beloved country, mother of nations, mother, too, of some of the bravest and best yet born on to the earth, that as long as there remains one man or woman of British blood above British soil this England and her Empire may be ours—ours and our children's.

THE END

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